

"THE HAUNTED PAJAMAS"—BY FRANCIS PERRY ELLIOTT.

VOL 32 NO 2

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1910

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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS



"AUTUMN ROSES,"

By Emery Pottle.

"THE CRAVING,"

By Angela Morgan.

"OTHER WOMEN'S HUSBANDS,"

By Philippa Lyman.

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM'S LATEST NOVEL.

LONDON

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PARIS

The SMART SET for NOVEMBER

THE present issue of the SMART SET is the second in its enlarged form. The enlargement has met with universal favor.

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We have a splendid novel that we’re publishing complete in the November number. It’s “**Half-Gods**,” by **Mrs. Helen Martin**, author of “The Crossways,” “Tillie, a Mennonite Maid,” and other novels that have ranked among the best sellers of the past few years. This is a story of American life that cannot fail to leave a strong impression.

Viola Burhans’s great story, “A Second Chance,” will be one of the features. It was promised for last month, but was unavoidably held over.

Another magnificent story is **Mary Glascock’s**, “The Black Reach,” a tale of ambition and achievement woven about a football theme.

Richard Le Gallienne’s latest poem—and said by several critics to be the finest lyrical verse this gifted writer has ever penned—will be a feature next month.

Then there’ll be an extremely clever essay on “Airshipping”—a clever critique on the new plays—the best book review in the country—and several other features of the sort that gave the magazine its wonderful original reputation.

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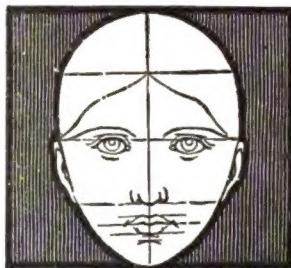
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Vol. XXXII

THE

SMART SET

A MAGA
ZINE

OF
CLEVERNESS

No. 2

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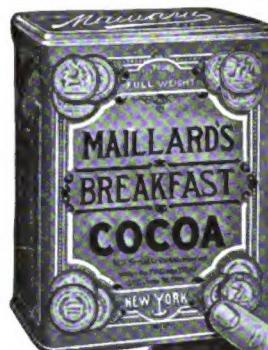
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THE HAUNTED PAJAMAS

By FRANCIS PERRY ELLIOTT

IT was the first thing I saw that night as I swung into my chambers.

Fact is, for the moment, it was the only thing I saw. Somehow, its splash of yellow there under the shaded lamp seemed to catch my eye and hold it.

I screwed my glass tight and examined the thing with interest. Nothing remarkable; just a tiny, oblong package, bearing curious foreign markings, its wrapper plainly addressed to me, but—

"By Jove! From China!" I ejaculated.

Somebody in far-off China sending me a present, with duties and charges prepaid evidently.

What the deuce was it? I shook it without getting any revelation; then I weighed it in my hand.

The thing was devilish light! In fact, so light that, allowing for outside wrapper and box, dashed if I could see how there was anything at all.

Then I had an awful thought: Suppose, by Jove, they had forgotten to inclose the thing—whatever it was! Jolly tiresome, that, if they had. I felt devilish annoyed.

Really, awfully provoking to do that sort of thing, you know; and I was jolly sure now the dashed thing had been wrapped up empty. I wondered what silly ass I knew in China who would be likely to do a thing like that.

I couldn't think of anyone at all I knew in China, so I rang for Jenkins.

"Anybody I know in China, Jenkins?" I asked. And to help him out, I added: "Fact is, some chap's sent me a package, you know."

"Name on box, sir, perhaps." Said it offhand, just like that—no trouble

of thinking, dash it all—never even blinked. Just instinct, by Jove!

And there it was, nicely printed in the corner with a pen:

ROLAND MASTERMANN, GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
HONG KONG, CHINA

I read it aloud—can't read anything, you know, unless I read it aloud—and looked at Jenkins inquiringly. But he came right up to the scratch; just seemed to get it from somewhere right out of the wall over my head:

"Beg pardon, sir; but think it's that London gentleman—entertained you at the Carlton when you were over last."

Mastermann! By Jove, so it was—I remembered him now, because I remembered his dinner. Jolly rum old boy, but entertaining and clever—long hair, pink wart on jaw! Yes, I remembered now; and I had promised him—promised him—what the deuce *was* it I had promised him? Let me see: Mastermann—something or other in the Foreign Office; yes, I had that—and tremendously interested in mummies and psychical investigation and rum sort of things like that, and—

"By Jove!" I ejaculated, as it came to me. "And for that reason he wanted them to send him out to China."

"Beg pardon, sir," put in Jenkins, "but think you had a letter with a Chinese postmark last week."

He looked around at my little writing desk and coughed slightly behind his hand.

"Was just a-wondering, sir, if it might not be among those you haven't opened—there are several piles. If I might look, sir—"

I nodded. Fact is, I allow Jenkins

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much privilege owing to long service. Then, you know—Oh, dash it, he's so original—so refreshing and that sort of thing—so surprising. Just as in this case, he thinks of so many devilishly ingenious, out-of-the-way sort of things!

It was Jenkins's idea that I find out what was in the box by just *opening* the dashed thing while he looked for the letter.

Clever that, eh? Well, rather!

So I unsheathed my little pocket manicure knife, cut the strings and removed the wrapper. Inside was just a little, straw-covered box with a telescope cover and inside the box, wrapped in tissue, was a tight roll of bright red silk.

That was all—not another thing but this little silk roll. It was a wad as thick as three fingers and perhaps twice as long, tied with a bit of common string, ending in a loose bowknot.

I gripped my glass a bit tighter in my eye and took a long shot at the thing. But dashed if I could make anything out of it at all. You see, the string went around it at least three or four times. Such a devilish secretive way to fix a thing, don't you think?

A queer, sweet, spicy sort of odor swept past me that reminded me of the atmosphere at Santine's and places in the Metropolitan Art Museum.

I sat down, the better to think it over, turning the little roll in my hand and trying to think of all the things it might be.

"Looks like it might be a red silk muffler, Jenkins," I exclaimed in disgust. By Jove, I was never so devilish disappointed in my life—never—I'm sure of it! If I had been a girl I should have cried—dash it, I know I should.

I pinched the roll gloomily.

"If it's a red silk muffler, Jenkins, catch me wearing it, that's all!" I burst out indignantly. "Rotten bad form, if you ask me. I'd look like an out-and-out bounder!"

Then I had a horrible thought:

"Or—or the Salvation Army, dash it!"

Here Jenkins thrust a letter at me. "Perhaps this may explain it, sir," he suggested.

Sure enough, it was from Hong Kong, and from that chap Mastermann. Out there on special mission for his government, he said. I don't know what it was—never did know, in fact, for I skipped down to this paragraph, which I read aloud:

"Every puff of those rare cigars you sent me has but reminded me that my debt to you is still unpaid."

I read thus far; then I read it again. But I could make nothing of it.

"Cigars—cigars?" I exclaimed, puzzled.

Then I forgot the letter as I stared at Jenkins.

"And what's the matter with *you*?" I demanded.

For I had caught him with his hand over his mouth, obviously trying to suppress a chuckle. He sobered instantly, but seemed embarrassed for a reply.

"Oh, I say, you know!" I urged him.

He started to speak, then pulled up. His breath went out in a sort of sigh. And he just stood there looking at me, and looking kind of scared.

Fact! Perfectly irreproachable service for five years; and now here, dash it, showing emotion and that sort of thing just like—well, like *people*, by Jove! Gad, I don't mind saying I was devilish put out!

I screwed my glass rather severely and he made another go:

"I hope, Mr. Lightnut, sir, you'll try to pardon me, sir, but I—Well, indeed, sir, the mistake wasn't mine; it was the dealer's fault, you know, sir."

"Oh!"

I stared, polished my glass and nodded. I even chirped up a smile, but I didn't utter a word. Dash it, what *was* there to say? But you mustn't let *them* know that, you know. So I just waited, and he squirmed a little and went on:

"It was too late after he told me about the mistake; and I was—well, I was afraid to mention it to you, sir."

"Mistake! What mistake?"

He gulped; dashed if I didn't think he was going to choke.

"I—I'm sure, sir, I wouldn't have had such a thing happen for—"

I could stand it no longer.

"Oh, I say! I haven't any idea what you're talking about!"

Jenkins cleared his throat with an effort, his eyes rolling at me apologetically. When he spoke there was a tremble in his utterance, and it was rather husky:

"Why, sir," he began in a low tone, "you told me to have your dealer ship this gentleman, this Mr. Mastermann, a dozen boxes of Paloma perfectos—your favorite brand, you know, sir—ninety dollars the hundred."

He paused, his fingers resting tremblingly on the edge of the table.

"I dare say," I yawned presently. "Well, what of it?" I was getting impatient. By Jove, he was making me downright nervous, don't you know! Besides, I was so devilish anxious to get on with Mastermann's letter. I wanted to find out, if possible, what it was the fellow had sent me.

Jenkins breathed hard and leaned toward me. Then he seemed to flunk again and dropped back. Dashed if I didn't think I heard him groan! But I stared at him through my glass, and he swallowed hard and went on:

"An error, sir, of the shipping clerk. He—"

With a murmured apology, Jenkins paused to wipe his forehead. I saw that the perspiration had gathered in great drops. Then he seemed to gather himself for a resolute effort, his eyes fixing themselves upon me with the most extraordinary expression—kind of half-frightened, half-desperate glare—that sort of thing, don't you know. I began to feel devilish uncomfortable and edged away.

And he made another plunge: "They sent him—"

And, dash me if he didn't stick again! It just looked like he couldn't get past. But I encouraged him—just like you have to do a horse, you know—and this time he got over:

"They sent him a dozen boxes of 'Hickey's Pride,' sir, instead!"

He spoke in a low, choking voice and looked me full in the eye—the kind of look you get when a chap's boxing with you, you know—that sort of thing.

II

I WAS puzzled.

"'Hickey's Pride?'" I repeated thoughtfully. "I don't seem to recall that one. Do I smoke it often?"

Jenkins seemed to gasp.

"You? Certainly *not*, sir! *Never!*"

And, by Jove, he turned pale! Anyhow, he looked devilish queer as he put his hands down on the table and bent to whisper:

"Mr. Lightnut, sir—" And the way he dropped his voice and turned his head to peer around into the corners was just creepy! That's what, creepy! This, with the glow from the green lampshade on his pale face as he leaned across the table—oh, it was something ghastly—awful, you know! It got on my nerves, and I could feel the hair slowly rising on each side of my part. He bent close, whispering behind his hand, and I knew he had been eating radishes for dinner:

"It's what's known in the trade, sir, as a 'twofer.'"

"A 'twofer'!" I repeated, puzzled.

"Two for five, sir." Jenkins spoke faintly. "I'm sure I'm ashamed to mention to a perfect gen—"

"By Jove, I know!" I lifted my finger suddenly. "I know now the kind you mean—big, fat, greasy-looking ones—the sort Vanderdecker and Colonel Boylston smoke over at the club." I shook my head. "Too jolly thick and heavy for me. So they're two for a 'V'—eh? Oh, I see—'twofers!' By Jove!"

A brand new one, this—a ripper! I made up my mind to spring it on the fellows first chance—that is, if I could remember the jolly thing. I just looked at Jenkins's solemn face and laughed.

"Oh, I say, Jenkins—hang the expense, you know!" I remonstrated in some disgust. For this London chap had given me no end of a good time, you know; and it's such devilish bad form—rotten, I say—haggling about expense when you want to make a come-back and do the handsome. I was jolly glad the mistake had happened.

Just here I remembered the letter and went at it again, for I was keen to find

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out, if possible, if it *was* a muffler under the string. So I fixed my glass and read on:

"Realizing what these cigars are, I have given them, from time to time, to friends of mine—and others. Really, I don't think I ever had such unselfish, unalloyed pleasure from anything in my life. Gave one to a bus driver out Earl's Court way—chap who had never been known to speak to man, woman or child in years; and, after he lighted it—well, my word! He opened up and grew so bally loquacious I had to get off."

"By Jove!" I exclaimed.

I felt real pleased—that kind of fizzy glow—sort of bubbling-champagney-feeling you get, you know, whenever a friend does some clever, unexpected thing—like repaying a loan, for instance. Know about that, because I had it happen to me once. Fact!

"See that, Jenkins?" I said with a little triumph.

I wanted to reassure him, for I could see with half an eye that the poor fellow was devilish plucked about the expense. And Jenkins certainly looked regularly bowled over.

I read on:

"Had been trying to get Jorgins, my chief, to send me out here again to China, but he was ever finding some cold, beastly evasion. But when your package came to the office, the first thing I did after I had tried the cigars was to hand the old iceberg a box with my compliments.

"Five minutes after, he came back, completely thawed out. Fact is, never saw him so warm toward anyone. Asked me if the other boxes were to be given away outside. Said no; that his was the only box I could spare; was going to keep 'em all there at the office and smoke 'em myself. Never saw a man so moved—so worked up over a little thing. Next day he sent me out here to China.

"Coals of fire!" I ejaculated admiringly. "Regular out-and-out coals of fire, by Jove!"

"And so I have been looking about since I have been out here, trying to find something as rare, unique and full of surprises for your friends as your cigars have been for mine. I have found it.

"And devilish handsome of him, Jenkins, eh?" I commented gratefully; and I looked with renewed interest at the little roll in my hand. Jove, how I wished, though, he would come to the point and say what it was!

"You know what a curiously upside-down people the Chinese are. Example, they begin dinner with dessert and end with soup; they drink hot, acid beverages in summer instead of iced ones; they write from right to left, vertically, while we write from left to right, horizontally; they mourn in white instead of black, and they are awfully honest and pay their debts.

"But there is one other point of difference still queerer: they wear pajamas all day, while we wear them only at night."

Here I yawned. Always hate that heavy, historical, instructive stuff, you know. If you have to hear it, gives you headache, unless you can slip off to sleep first.

So I reached the letter up to Jenkins.

"Just run over the rest of it yourself, and see if he says anything about his present," I said, settling comfortably. Clever idea of mine, don't you think?

And I was just dropping my head to have a snug little nap—just a little forty you know—when, dash me, if I didn't have another idea! Awfully annoying, time like that.

Mind is so devilish alert, dash it! Always doing things like that; can't seem to get over it, you know. And this ripping idea that bobbed up now and got me all roused up was nothing more or less than to untie the string myself and see what the thing was. See?

"I believe, sir," said Jenkins, looking up, "the gentleman has sent you—h'm—has sent you—"

"By Jove, a suit of pajamas!" I exclaimed, holding them up.

It was neck and neck, but I beat Jenkins to it, after all!

"Gentleman says, sir," continued Jenkins, studying the letter, "that his present of a pair of pajamas may seem surprising, but you won't know how surprising until you have worn them."

"Jolly likely," I admitted, feeling the silk. By Jove, it was the finest, yet thinnest stuff I ever saw, soft as rose leaves and as filmy light as a spider's web. Not bad, that, for a comparison, eh? Caught the idea from the vase of full-blown roses that were beginning to shed their petals there on the table. And on one of the blossoms was a little brown spider. Catch the idea? Suggested spider's web, you know.

"They're rather red, sir," Jenkins commented dubiously.

Red? Well, I should say! My! How jolly red they were! We spread them under the light, and the red seemed to flow all over the table and fall from the edge. Why, they were as red as—

I tried to think of something they were as red as, but somehow I couldn't fetch the idea. I thought of red ink and blood and fireworks, but they didn't seem to be up to them, at all. And a big, velvety petal that dropped from one of the crimson roses just seemed brown beside them.

And yet, dash it, I knew they reminded me of something, you know; I knew they *must*.

"They remind me—" I began, and had to pause—idea balked, you know. "They remind me of—of— Jenkins, what do they remind me of?"

"Of him, sir," replied Jenkins promptly.

"Eh?"

"Old Memphis Tuffles, sir," explained Jenkins darkly. "I saw him once in a opera, and he was that red."

"By Jove!" I said thoughtfully, and fell to watching the little spider. It was dropping a life line or something down to the pajamas.

"But they say he ain't always red," Jenkins continued mysteriously. "A lady as is in the palmistry and card reading line in Forty-second Street told me he turned black whenever he got down to business. Do you suppose that's where they get the idea of what they call black magic, sir?"

I answered absently, for I was wondering whether the little spider was curious about the jolly red color there below him. And just then Jenkins's hand went out and swept at the little thread. The spider dropped and shot into a fold of the pajamas.

"I say! Look out!" I exclaimed as Jenkins made another clutch. "Don't mash the beast on the silk; you'll ruin it—the silk, I mean!"

"There it goes, sir!" said Jenkins eagerly. "Over by your hand."

"No; by Jove; he's gone into a leg of

the pajamas! Here, shake him out—gently now!"

Jenkins lifted the garment gingerly and lightly shook it. But nothing came forth.

"Why don't you look in the leg," I said, "and see if you can see it?"

Jenkins peered down one of the silken tubes and forthwith dropped it with a yell. He jumped back.

"Look out, sir," he cried excitedly; "don't touch 'em! There's a tarantula in there big as a sand crab, and it's alive."

"A tarantula? Nonsense! We don't have tarantulas in New York," I protested.

Jenkins gestured violently. "One's there, sir, anyhow! I saw one once on a bunch of bananas down in South Street. If they jump on you and bite, you might as well just walk around to the undertaker. A dago told me so."

I backed nervously from the crumpled crimson pile on the floor.

Crimson?

Of course, I knew it was crimson; it must be the shadow of the table there that made the things so dark—almost black, in fact. But my mind was on the tarantula; and I was thinking that it must have been wrapped with the pajamas. Yet I could not understand how this could be, considering how tightly the things had been rolled.

Anyhow, it was there; and Jenkins pointed excitedly.

"Look, sir! You can see it moving under the silk!"

By Jove, so you could! And the thing seemed nearly as big as a rat. It was making for the end of the leg. I climbed upon a chair.

"Get a club," I exclaimed, "and smash the thing as it comes out!"

Jenkins rushed out and returned with a brassie.

"Careful now," I warned from the chair. "Don't go and hit the dashed thing before it gets out, and make a devil of a mess on the silk! There it is—it's out! No, no—not yet! Wait, until it gets its whole body out! There now; he's drawing out his last beastly leg. Now—now let drive!"

And he did, and seemed to hit the thing squarely.

I knelt on the chair and craned over, while Jenkins still held the stick tightly at the point where the thing had struck.

"Get him?" I queried. "Where is it?"

"That's it, sir," said Jenkins in an odd voice. "It ain't here."

"Why, dash it, I saw you strike the beast, right where you're holding that club."

"Mr. Lightnut, sir"—Jenkins spoke a little huskily and glanced around at me queerly—"will you look under the end of this stick and see if you see what I see?"

I climbed down and examined cautiously.

"Why, by Jove, it's the little spider!" I exclaimed, surprised.

"Exactly, sir; what's left." Jenkins took a deep breath.

"Thank you, sir—it's a great relief," he sighed.

"Eh?"

"I mean, sir, I'm glad I ain't the only one thought he saw that other. It's *some* comfort."

Jenkins spoke gloomily.

"*Thought* you saw?" I repeated.

But Jenkins only shook his head as he gathered up the remains of the spider and consigned them to a cuspidor.

"You mean—say, what the devil *do* you mean?" I asked sharply.

Jenkins straightened with air respectful but solemn.

"Mr. Lightnut, sir," he began gravely, "there's a party lectures on the street corner every night at nine on the fearful consequences of the drink habit, and passes around blank pledges to be signed. I'm going to get one first chance; and if you will accept it, sir—meaning no offense—I would be proud to get you one, too."

I stared at him aghast.

"Oh, I say now," I murmured faintly, "you don't think it was that, do you?"

Jenkins's face was eloquent enough.

"I'm through, sir," he said sadly. "When it comes to seeing things like that—" He lifted his eyes. "No more

for me, sir; my belief is, it's a warning—yes, sir, that's what, a warning."

I collapsed into a chair.

"By Jove!" I gasped uneasily.

I was awfully put out—annoyed, you know. It was the first time anything of the kind had ever happened to me. If I started in with tarantulas, what would I be seeing next?

Jenkins gulped nervously. "Why, sir," he whispered, leaning toward me, "these pajamas—you see for yourself how red they are—they actually seemed to lose color when that bug was in 'em."

"Oh, pshaw!" I said contemptuously. "I saw that, too." And I explained to him about the shadow of the table. He nodded.

"But that only makes it worse, sir," he commented dubiously. "It shows the 'mental condition,' as they say. You know, we were talking about the black art—remember, sir?"

I did remember; and also I remembered then we saw the spider. I recalled that spiders and tarantulas belonged to the same family. Of course Jenkins's suspicions hit the nail—it must be that—there was no getting around it—but still—

"By Jove, Jenkins!" I said, trying to go a feeble smile. "I never felt so fit for a corking stiff highball in my life—never!"

I took a screw on my glass and studied him curiously.

"And I say, you know—better take one yourself!" I added.

III

"By Jove, Jenkins, they fit like a dream!"

I twisted before the glass and surveyed the pajamas with much satisfaction. They looked jolly right from every point. Moreover, with all their easy looseness, there was not an inch too much. They had a comfortable, personal feel.

"Lucky thing they weren't made originally for some whale like Jack Billings—eh, Jenkins?" I commented musingly.

Behind his hand Jenkins indulged in what is vulgarly known as a snicker.

"Mr. Billings, sir, he couldn't get one shoulder in 'em, much less a—h'm—leg," he chuckled. "They'd be in ribbons, sir!"

I yawned sleepily, and Jenkins instantly sobered to attention. He held his finger over the light switch as I punched a pillow and rolled over on the mattress.

"All right," I said; "push the jolly thing out." And with a click, darkness fell about me.

"Good night, sir," came Jenkins's voice softly.

"Night," I murmured faintly, and I was off.

Somewhere, hours later, I awoke, and with a devilish yearning for a smoke. It often takes me that way in the night.

I climbed out in the blackness and found my way into the other room. I remembered exactly where I had dropped my cigarette case when we were fooling with the pajamas by the table, and I found it without difficulty.

In the act of stooping for it, my hand clutched the edge of the table and I felt a spot yield under the pressure of my thumb. It was the button controlling the bell to Jenkins's room.

"Lucky thing he sleeps like a jolly porpoise," I reflected.

I pushed a wicker armchair into the moonlight and breeze by a window, and pulling a flame to a cigarette, leaned back, feeling jolly comfy. For the breeze was rippling and delicious, and the delicate silk of the pajamas flowed in little wavelets all the way from my heels to my neck.

And, thinking of the pajamas, I tried to fix my mind on it that I must tell Jenkins to have me write that chap, Mastermann, and send him another lot of those devilish good cigars he liked. I tried to recall what Jenkins had said was the name of the brand—something deuced clever, I remembered that much.

I was just about dropping off, when I heard someone hurrying along the private hall leading from the back. Jenkins himself popped into the room.

"Did you ring, sir?" he inquired, and advanced quickly.

And then, before I could think about it to reply, he halted suddenly, almost pitching forward. Then, with a kind of wheezy howl, he sprang to the wall. Next instant, I was blinking under the dazzling electrolier.

"Here, I say! Shut off that light!" I remonstrated, half blinded.

I heard a swift rush across the rugs, and the next thing I knew I was roughly jerked from out my chair; strong fingers clutched my throat, and I found myself glaring into a frightened but resolute face.

"Jen-Jenkins!" I tried to gasp, but only a gurgle came.

I was so taken unawares, I knew it must be some dashed dream. Perhaps another minute, and I would wake up.

But he gripped me tighter and shook me like a rag.

"Say, who are you?" he hissed. "How did you get in here?"

And then, of course, I knew that he was crazy.

Whether he was crazy in a dream or crazy with me awake, I couldn't guess. It made very little difference anyhow, for I knew that in another minute I should be either dream dead or real dead; and dash me if I could see any odds worth tossing for in either, you know.

But I don't belong to the athletic club quite for nothing, and have managed to pick up a few tricks, you know. So with the decision to chuck the dream theory, I shot my leg forward with a mix-up and twist that made Jenkins loosen his clutch and stagger backward.

"What's the matter with you?" I gasped, advancing toward him. "Are you trying to murder me?" But I was so hoarse, the only word that came out plainly was "murder."

Jenkins uttered a howl. "Help, Mr. Lightnut! Murder!"

"You old fool!" I cried, exasperated. "Come here!"

He was coming. He seized a light chair and swung it behind his head. Then he rushed me with a shout.

"Oh, Mr. Lightnut!"

"Gone clear off his nut!" was my

thought. As he swung the chair, I ducked low, and man and chair went crashing to the floor. But he was up again in a jiffy and dancing at me.

"Mr. Lightnut, sir, why don't you help me?"

"Help you—you jolly idiot?" I muttered indignantly. Then my voice raised: "I've a mind to kill you!"

With a yell, he made a kangaroo jump and swung at me again.

"He says he's going to kill me, Mr. Lightnut," he panted as I dodged again. "Help me—wake up, sir!"

Wake up? Wake up, indeed, when I had never been so devilish wide awake in all my life! I was *sure* now about that. I moved toward him cautiously.

"Stop your row!" I cried angrily; "you'll have somebody in. Think I want the police up here?"

With a wild glare at me, Jenkins darted past me to the bedroom I had just left. Its light switch clicked, and then back through the brightened doorway he sprang and dashed for a wall cabinet at the side. He began tugging at its little drawer. And suddenly I remembered the revolver there, an old forty-five from a friend in Denver—and loaded!

My spring to intercept him was quick, but not quick enough. Halfway to him, I pulled up under the compelling argument of the long blue barrel pointed at my head.

"Here! Look out, you fool—it's loaded!" I warned, backing away to the window.

Jenkins advanced. "What have you done with him?" he panted hoarsely. "Where is he?"

"Where's who?" I asked savagely, for I was getting devilish tired of it all. But for the publicity, I should have yelled from the window.

"Where's Mr. Lightnut?" he demanded.

"Oh, he's all right." I decided to adopt that soothing tone that I had read somewhere was the proper caper with lunatics.

"Where?" Jenkins insisted, pushing nearer.

And dashed if I knew what to answer;

for, if I made a mistake, it might be serious, by Jove! Perhaps some jocular reply would be safest—might divert his attention, you know.

The open window gave me an idea:

"Why, do you know," I said pleasantly, "I just chucked him down into the street."

It sounded like a cannon cracker, that gun!

The shower of splintered glass from the picture between the windows barely missed me.

But I never waited a second—for this last devilish straw was too much, don't you know, and something had to be done. I leaped for the weapon as it struck the hardwood floor between us, jerked from Jenkins's hand by the unfamiliar upward kick. Another instant and I was poking the muzzle into his side.

"I've just had enough of this, you fool!" I cried impatiently. "Here, take a good look at me!" I pushed my face closer. "Look at me, I tell you!"

By Jove, he shuddered! His eyes, wide distended with terror, rolled to the ceiling.

"I can't," he whispered; "I just can't—anything but that! Only, please—please don't kill me, too."

"Kill you?" I said, frowning sternly as he gave a furtive glance. "I certainly will, if you don't take a good look at me!"

He gave a sort of despairing sigh and closed his eyes so tightly the lashes disappeared. "All right then," he said sullenly. "You may kill me!"

The way with these lunatics, I thought. Next thing, he would be begging and insisting that I kill him. I motioned to the door of my guest room and gave him a push.

"In there," I said, "and keep perfectly quiet."

And as he shot inside, I closed the door and locked it.

I just had to take the chance of his hurting himself against the walls and furniture; I didn't believe he was so crazy he would undertake the six-story leap to the ground.

Listening, I heard something like a sob. Then I caught my name.

"Poor Mr. Lightnut," came chokingly; "the kindest, gentlest master!" And then more sobs and gulps.

By Jove, under his insane delusion, the poor beggar was grieving for me; not thinking of himself at all, you know. I felt my eyes grow a bit moist, somehow, and all at once my heart went heavy. Thought how long poor old Jenkins had been with me—ever since I was out of college, you know—five years—and remembered how devilish faithful and attached he had always been. Poor old Jenks! It was awful his going off this way! I recalled how he had taken to seeing things, earlier in the evening, and had made me see them, too, dash it! One thing I determined: whatever had to be done with him, he should have the finest of attention.

I knew that I ought to telephone to somebody or something, but dashed if I had any idea who or where. Oddly enough not a soul seemed to have been roused by the pistol shot, but I saw by the little clock that it was close to three—the hour in a bachelor apartment house when everybody is asleep, if they're going to sleep at all.

I decided that the best thing to do first was to get into some clothes. And with this thought I was turning away, when it occurred to me to make an effort to see if poor Jenkins seemed more rational now or had gone to sleep.

I tapped upon the door. "Are you asleep?" I asked softly.

A howl of positive terror came back.

"I'm a-keeping quiet," he cried, "but don't let me hear your voice again, or I'll jump right out of the window."

I shook my head sadly and tiptoed into my room, where I slipped hurriedly out of the pajamas and into some clothes; then back I went to the telephone. It was on my little writing desk close to the door confining Jenkins.

I lifted the receiver with a sigh.

"Hello, central," I began, responding to the operator. "I say, will you give me 'information'?"

A loud shout suddenly sounded from behind the closed door, and there came a frantic double-pounding of fists.

"Mr. Lightnut—Mr. Lightnut!"

screamed Jenkins. "Oh, Mr. Lightnut, you're back—you're alive—I can hear your voice! This is Jenkins, Mr. Lightnut; yes, sir, Jenkins. They've got me locked in!"

I clapped the receiver on the hook and sprang to the door, unlocking it. Jenkins almost tumbled into my arms. By Jove, for a second I hung in the wind, he acted so crazy still; at least, it seemed so just at first. The fellow threw his arm about my neck and laughed—laughed and cried, dash it—and just wringing my hands and carrying on—Oh, awful! And even when I got him into a chair, he just sat there laughing and crying like a jolly old silly, patting my hand, you know, and wiping his eyes, what time they were not devouring me.

"Has he gone, sir?" he gasped huskily. "Did he jump from the window?" But I waved all questions aside.

"After you've had some sleep," I insisted. "Then I'll tell you the whole jolly story." And I just got him to his room myself, despite his distress and protests over my attention.

"Thank you, sir, and good night," he said as I left him. And he murmured placidly: "I guess we're all right now."

But I was not so sure as to *him*, when I viewed the broken chair and scattered fragments of glass—ominous reminders of the scene through which I had passed. And so, though I threw the pistol on top of a bookcase, I spent the rest of the night upon the soft cushions of my big divan.

IV

"BUT this savage-looking Chinaman that you saw, Jenkins—how was he dressed?" I adopted a careless tone of inquiry.

It was high noon, and I was toying with an after luncheon, or rather, after breakfast, cigar.

Jenkins's head shook dubiously. "I just remember something blackish. My, sir, I didn't have time to notice nothing like clothes!"

His tone conveyed aggrieved protest. He went on:

THE HAUNTED PAJAMAS

"Just as I'm telling you, sir, I saw someone sitting there by the window and walked toward him, thinking it was you. Then, all of a sudden, I see his awful face a-scowling at me there in the moonlight."

"And he was smoking, you say?"

Jenkins sniffed indignantly. "Free and easy as a lord, sir! He held a long stick to his ugly mouth, and smoke was curling out of a little bowl near the end."

"Oh, opium pipe, eh?"

"Likely, sir," agreed Jenkins; "but I never saw one."

By Jove, I had my own opinion about that! I knew he *must* have seen one before; but I just went on questioning, to gain time, you know, and wondering all the while how I should ever be able to break the truth to the poor fellow.

"Tell me again what he was like," I said. "How did you know he was a Chinaman?"

"Why, by his long black pigtail, sir, and his onery color. But I never saw no Chinaman as ugly as this one—no sir. Oh, he was just too awful horrid to look at, sir. His forehead sloped away back, or maybe the front part of his head being all shaved made it look that way. And the skin about his eyes was painted white with red streaks shooting around like rays of light."

"No beard or mustache, I suppose?" I suggested, feeling my own smooth shaven face. Jenkins's reply was a surprise:

"Yes, sir; there were long black kind of rat tails that dropped down from the sides of his mouth. And then his neck—ugh—all thick with woolly hair."

"Oh, it was, eh?" I said drily, thinking of the long red stripe that my collar concealed. "I suppose you felt this, eh, when you jumped at his throat?"

Jenkins rubbed his chin with a puzzled air.

"Why, that's uncommon queer, sir; but now that you remind me, I do remember that his neck felt perfectly smooth—and it wasn't so big, either. Why, I should say it felt just about like yours would, sir."

I eyed him ruefully.

"By Jove, I don't doubt it a minute!"

I commented with some disgust. "See here, Jenkins, I suppose you've been to the Chinese theater down in Doyers Street, eh?"

For I had been down there with slumming parties, and I remembered the hideous sorcerers, fierce warriors and kings the Chinks represent in their interminable plays. And the facial make-up described by Jenkins tallied in a way with some I recalled from these ancient, semi-mythical plays.

But at my question, Jenkins's lip curled a little; dash me, but he looked almost insulted.

"I should say not, sir," he said with a sniff; "you don't catch me going down in them parts!" He added quickly: "Meaning no offense, sir."

"Sure?" I questioned sharply.

"Never, sir!" Jenkins's earnestness was unmistakable. But of course I knew the poor fellow had forgotten all about it.

"One of the jolly rum things that goes along with his affliction," I reflected sadly. "A month from now the poor beggar will be swearing he never saw me in his life." And how the devil was I going to break the truth to him? I sighed perplexedly. "Well, go on with your yarn," I said irresolutely. "You were telling, when I interrupted, about rushing into my bedroom."

"Yes, sir," he resumed with animation. "And when I didn't find you, I was just frantic, for I didn't know you had gone out, sir—never thought of that; I went for the ugly monster with the big pistol there in the cabinet—which, by the way, sir, the low down villain stole when he locked me up and lit out."

I had an inspiration.

"I see," I broke in carelessly; "and then you demanded to know where I was—that it? Then you backed him to that window, and he told you he had chucked me into the street—whereupon you tried to blow off his head and knocked the jolly daylights out of the lady with the fencing foil."

Jenkins, his mouth agape, viewed me with distended eyes.

"I didn't tell you that, sir," he faltered. "How—"

"And when you dropped the weapon," I went on, "this chap collared it, jabbed the beastly thing into you, and told you to look at him. And by Jove you wouldn't!"

Jenkins groaned slightly. The apologetic cough with which he strove to mantle the sound was dry and spiritless.

"No, sir; it seemed easier to die, sir," he murmured—"what with him grinning like a fiend and his long teeth a-sticking out over his lip—ugh!" Then he added wonderingly: "But what gets me is how you should know, sir."

I looked at him gravely.

"Jenkins," I said gently, "I know, because it so happens I was here all the time."

His eyes bulged incredulously.

"You, sir? You mean in this room?"

I nodded slowly. "I mean right in this room—I was a witness of the whole thing."

Jenkins just gulped. I motioned to a chair.

"You may sit down, Jenkins, my poor fellow," I said compassionately. I poured out some whiskey and gave it to him.

"Yes, yes; I want you to drink that," I insisted as he took it hesitatingly. "You will need it. Drink every drop of it."

And I watched him do it. For somehow the poor devil seemed to be growing paler every minute, and I was afraid the shock of what I was going to say would send him into a swoon.

Jenkins replaced the empty glass with a positively trembling hand. By Jove, his face turned a kind of asparagus yellow.

It alarmed me a little, for I felt apprehensive that perhaps it was time for him to have another spell, you know. Of course, I knew that the devilishly adroit, tactful way I was breaking it to him wouldn't disturb the peace of a baby. Some people would have gone about the thing in some deuced abrupt way, don't you know, and alarmed him. I didn't want to do that—in fact, I took pains to tell him so at the start.

"I don't want to frighten you, my poor fellow," I said, leaning toward him

and speaking in a low, earnest voice—just that way, you know—no excitement. "You mustn't let anything I say frighten you badly about yourself."

"No, sir. Thank you, sir." But I could hardly hear him.

I waited a moment, eying him steadily—just doing it all in that calm way, you know—and then:

"You must brace yourself for a great shock, my poor Jenkins," I said soothingly. And then I thought I had best hurry on, for I could tell by the way his eyes rolled and the blue color of his lips that probably I was just in time to head off another attack. And then I told him all.

"And here," I concluded, "are the marks of your fingers under my collar, and the pistol is on top of the bookcase."

Jenkins just sat there, kind of huddled up, you know, and his face as white as the what-you-call-it snow. Didn't seem to be able to say a word. By Jove, it was too much for me; my heart just went out to him.

"It's all right, Jenkins," I said kindly, and I patted his knee. "Doesn't make a jolly bit of difference to me, personally. Just told you because I thought you ought to know. You just go right along and continue your duties, so far as I am concerned."

Jenkins's hand slipped along his knee and ventured to touch mine timidly. He rose heavily.

"Mr. Lightnut, sir," he said huskily, "if you're not going to need me very much, could I be excused for a while tonight?"

"By Jove, yes, Jenkins! Go out and enjoy the evening; it will do you good. Stay as long as you like, dash it! You know I dine tonight at the club. Go to a roof garden and get some fresh air."

A toss of the head broke Jenkins's calm; his fist struck his palm.

"It ain't that, sir," he exclaimed. "I don't want no fresh air, but I do want fresh resolution and a fresh start. I'm going to find *him*."

"Him!" I was startled. Dash me, I half thought he meant the Chinaman.

"Him, sir; that temperance lecturer, I mean. I'm going to get out a paper

against that old enemy there!" And he shook his fist at the whiskey decanter.

V

"LONG distance call from Mr. Billings, sir," said Jenkins, lifting the receiver.

By Jove, he had just caught me as I was about to leave.

"Hello! That you, Lightnut?" came his voice. "Say, old chap, you remember you said you wouldn't mind putting up the kid over night on the way home from college. Remember? Wants to rest over and come up the river on the day line."

Yes, I remembered, and said so.

"All right, then; it's tonight. Be there about nine from Boston. Don't go to any trouble, now, nor alter any plans. The kid will probably be dead tired and off to bed before you get home from your dinner."

"That's all right, old chap; Jenkins will look after the young one."

I heard Billings chuckle—I remembered that chuckle afterward.

"Not much of the young one there. Eighteen, you know. Never off to school though until last year—and by George, it was time! Between my mother and my sisters, the kid was being ruined—petted, mollycoddled, and was getting soft and silly—oh, something to make you sick. Well, so much obliged, Dicky. You know what these hotels are. Good-bye."

I explained to Jenkins. "All right, sir," he said. "I won't go out until after nine. It'll be time enough."

And so I went off. I returned early, about ten, and sat reading. Jenkins was still away, and the door of my guest room was open.

"Good evening!"

The voice behind me was soft, musical, delicious.

I whirled about, and there, within the door, leaning against the frame, was the most beautiful creature I ever saw in all my life.

A girl! But oh, by Jove, *such* a girl! A lovely, rosy blonde, dash it! Golden-

haired angel—long, droopy kind of lashes, don't you know—eyes like dreamy sapphire seas—oh, that sort of thing—a peach!

The leap that brought me to my feet sent my chair thudding backward.

"Why—er—good evening," I managed to stammer. Just managed, you know, for, give you my word, I never was so bowled over in my life—never!

And on the instant I guessed what it meant. The "kid" that Billings referred to wasn't a kid brother at all, but was a kid sister—girl, by Jove!

"Are you busy?" I saw the flash of her perfect little teeth as her lips parted in a smile. "If not, may I talk to you a while?"

I mumbled something designed to be pleasant—dash me if I know what—and managed to summon sense enough to lift toward her a wicker armchair. Then I dashed into my bedroom to chuck the smoking jacket and get into a coat.

And all the while I was thinking harder than I ever had thought it possible.

Just the thing to have expected of an ass like Billings—a fellow with no sense of the proprieties! His kind of mind had never got any further than the fact that I had a guest room and a quiet apartment. The further fact that it was in a bachelor apartment house and I a bachelor—and not yet out of my twenties, dash it—would never have presented itself to a chump like Billings as having any bearing on the matter.

"Of course, I must get right over to the club and leave her in possession—it's the only thing left to do." This was my thought as I slipped into my coat and gave my hair a touch—just a touch, don't you know. The thing to do was to carry it off as naturally as possible for a few minutes, and then slip away. Probably she hadn't counted upon my being in town at all—had taken it for granted it was some sort of family apartment—with housekeeper, servant maids, all that sort of thing.

"Never mind," I thought, as I kicked off my half-shoes and jerked on the first things at hand. "Thing to do

now is to keep that child's mind from being distressed. She'll have a good sleep and get off early in the morning on the Albany boat. Don't suppose she'd understand, anyhow—sweet, innocent, unsophisticated thing like that. What a fool Billings is!"

And I jammed in savagely the turquoise matrix pin with which I was replacing the pearl, because it went better with my tie.

"Now, just a few minutes of conversation to put her at her ease," I reflected, "and then I'm off. I'll get the janitor's wife to come up and stay near her."

And I dashed back, murmuring some jolly rubbish of apology. And then I just brought up speechless—almost fell over backward. For as she stood there under the light, I saw that what I had taken for a dress of black silk was not a dress at all, but a suit of pajamas—black, filmy pajamas, whose loose elegance concealed but could not wholly deny the goddesslike figure within.

"I'd have known you anywhere, Mr. Lightnut." And then I found that we were shaking hands, my fingers crushed in a grasp I never could have thought possible from that tiny hand. "From hearing Jack talk, your name is a sort of household word in the Billings family."

I mumbled something jolly idiotic—some acknowledgment. But I was pink about the ears, and I knew it, while she was cool and serene as a lily of the what-you-call-it, don't you know. I was trying not to see the pajamas, trying to pretend not to notice them, but dashed if I didn't only make it worse!

For she looked down at herself with a laugh—rather an embarrassed laugh, I thought; and her little shrug and glance directed attention to her attire.

"I see you're looking at the pajamas," she said, smiling.

And her eyes looked at me through those drooping lashes—oh, such a way!

"Oh, no—I assure—certainly not," I stammered hastily. Dash it, I never was so rebuked and mortified in my life. What an ass I had been to seem to notice at all!

She looked troubled. "Say, do you mind my wearing them?" she inquired.

"I? Certainly not—well, I should say not!" I retorted, almost with indignation.

"Sure?" By Jove, what ripping eyes she had!

"Of course not!" emphatically.

Her sunny head nodded satisfaction. "That's all right, then. I was afraid you wouldn't like it—afraid you would think I was acting a little *free*. But your man Jenkins—isn't that his name?—said he thought you would *like* for me to wear them."

I gasped.

"Jen—what's *that*?" I was amazed, indignant at Jenkins's effrontery. "He—he suggested that you wear—er—these?"

She nodded, her glorious eyes shining wistfully.

"You see, I went to a frat dance last night in Cambridge," she explained; "and in the hurry this morning, somehow, one of my bags—a suit case—was left behind. And when I got here tonight and began piling the things out of my other bag—well, I saw I was up a tree. Not a thing to slip into, you know—not so much as a dressing gown or even a bathrobe. Then your man saved my life—suggested these pajamas. See?"

"Oh, I see!"

I said so; but, dash it, I wasn't sure I did, for I knew so devilish little about girls. But I got hold of this much: I understood that this delicately reared creature had missed the restfulness and luxury of a shift to some sort of dressing robe after her day of travel. Probably one of those ribbony, pinky white fripperies one sees in the windows of the Avenue shops, rosy, foamy dreams like the—well, like the crest of a soda cocktail, don't you know. And the pajamas had been adopted as a comfortable makeshift.

By Jove! And here she was sitting, calmly telling me all about it—just as she might to Jack—never thinking a thing about it! My, how charming, how innocent she was! But, dash it, that was the reason she was so beautiful—of course, that was it—and I had never

seen anybody like her in all the world before. I knew jolly well I never should again, either. But I knew I ought to go—and at once.

"I must cut along now," I thought; "infernal shame to be taking advantage of her this way!" And then I thought I would wait just a wee minute longer.

Just then she turned toward me, her elbow on the arm of the wicker chair, her dainty, manicured finger tips supporting her chin.

"You know, Mr. Lightnut, I wasn't sure you would remember me at all," she said. "I was such a kid when you saw me last."

"Oh, yes," I said, trying to recall the rather hoydenish children I had seen on the motor trip to Billings's home five years before. "I remember you were quite a little girl—weren't you?"

I thought her face darkened a little; then her smile flashed through like sunshine through a cloud. Her laugh came on top, like the mellow ripple of a tiny brook—that sort of thing—oh, you know!

"Oh, I say now, Mr. Lightnut, cut out the josh," she remonstrated; and I thought she grew a little red. "No more for mine those sissy, girlie days—I've got well over all of that!"

She tossed one knee over the other and threw herself back in the chair. She seemed a little piqued. She went on:

"I just tell you what—there's nothing like a couple of years off at college for toughening you! Gets all those mamma's baby ways out of you, you bet your life, and all the slushiness you get from trying to be like your sisters. Shucks!"

I caught my breath. Of course, she had no idea how it sounded—this sort of talk; it was just her innocent frankness, her—what d'ye call it?—her *ingenuousness*—dash it!

She continued musingly. "Gee, but I was soft when I first went away—a regular pie-faced angel child!" Her voice had in it a sneer. Then she straightened up, whirled her chair facing me, and gave me a sounding slap on the knee. "Say, maybe the fellows I met

didn't educate that all out of me mighty quick! Well, I reckon, yes!" And she nodded, eyeing me sidewise, her pretty chin in air.

But, dash me, I was so aghast I couldn't get out a word. Just sat there batting at her and turning hot and cold by turns. Came devilish near losing consciousness, by Jove, that's what!

Of course, I knew she didn't know what she was talking about. Hadn't any sisters myself, don't you know, and never had learned much about other fellows' sisters; but, dash it, I knew something about *faces*, and I would have staked my life on hers. You can nearly always tell, you know. But, anyhow, I thought I had better go now.

I got up. "Say, you want to just make yourself at home," I said. "And if you don't mind, I'll see you at the boat in the morning."

She stood up, too, looking rather surprised. "You're not going away?"

"Oh, no; not out of town." I thought that was what she meant. I added: "And as I go out, I'll stop downstairs and have someone come up and stay with you."

She dropped to the arm of the chair, her pretty face showing dismay.

"Oh, but see here! I'm running you off—I know I am. Say, Mr. Lightnut, I don't want to do that. I thought sure you were going to be here. Brother insisted you would be."

Brother! Nice brother, indeed, for her—poor little thing!

"Oh, you'll be all right," I said reassuringly. "I'm just going over to the club, don't you know—not far away."

She came right up to me and placed a hand on each shoulder.

"Honest Injun, now," she said—and her smile was ravishing. "Honest, now, Mr. Lightnut, you're going just because I'm here. Say now, own up!"

And, dash it, there was nothing to do but admit it.

"All right," she said; and I thought her eyes flashed a little. "Then I go to a hotel—that's all!"

"A hotel! Why, you can't do that—oh, I say!"

"Why can't I?" She was downright angry—I could see it; and how distractingly lovely she was with that flame in her cheeks!

But she was just a child—an innocent little child; and how the deuce could I ever make her understand?

I stammered: "Why—er—not in New York, you know. They won't take a lady in at this time of night. They——"

She snapped her fingers. "Oh, I say, Mr. Lightnut, play easier on that girlie and lady pedal; cook up a fresh gag! I tell you, I've put all that behind me. Say, wait till you've known me a little, and I'll bet a purse you never call *me* a lady again! Lady! Say, that's funny!"

And it certainly seemed to strike her sense of humor. She gave me a sudden punch in the side that fairly left me breathless, and her laughter rang out birdlike, joyous. Of a sudden I felt devilish awkward and foolish.

"Oh, *please* stop stringing me, Mr. Lightnut—don't treat me like a kid. I want to get acquainted." Then her bright face sobered. "Say, was that on the level—that about your going to leave me? See here, I'm not bothering you, am I, Mr. Lightnut?"

"Bothering me!" I ejaculated. "Bothering *me*? I should say not!"

I think I must have said it hearty and convincing, don't you know, for her lovely face looked pleased.

"Because if I am," she said earnestly, "I'll fade away into my own little room there." Her glance ranged toward her door. "It's sure some swell, that room."

"So jolly glad you like it," I said.

"Well, I should say!" Then her beautiful eyes looked at me full.

"You know, I didn't expect this—I mean having a room all to myself. Never."

And then, while I gasped, she went on:

"Why, Mr. Lightnut, Brother Jack would throw seventeen thousand fits if I went to a hotel, because—" She laughed deliciously. "Well, I promised him that if he would let me come home

by New York I would stay right here with you and behave myself."

"Behave yourself!" I echoed indignantly. "Why, look here, do you mean to say Jack Billings—your own brother, you know—thought you wouldn't—er—do that at a hotel?"

"*Thought?*" Her laugh this time was explosive. "No, he never thought it; he *knew* I wouldn't! He knew I would be tearing around all night with the boys —that's what!"

And dash me, if she didn't throw herself back with a kind of swagger, by Jove!

"Why, you—you wouldn't do such a thing," I uttered faintly.

"Wouldn't I?" She straightened suddenly, and her lovely blue eyes narrowed at me. "Say, Mr. Lightnut, I don't want you to get me sized up wrong. I'm none of your little waxy gardenias—not much! When I'm in New York, it's the bright lights and the Great White Way for mine—yes, sir, every time!"

And she gave me a blow on the shoulder that was like a stroke from a man's arm. It sent me down into my chair.

"If you don't believe me," she added, her face shining with excitement, "just you ask Jack about last summer when I came through—about that joy ride to Coney with three Columbia fellows, and how we got pinched. Oh, mamma, but didn't Jack swear at me!"

I heard a noise by the door. Jenkins stood there, his eyes sticking out like hard boiled eggs.

"I—I'm back, sir," he said rather falteringly. "Beg pardon, sir; just thought you'd want to know. I didn't know you —h'm!" And with an odd look and a little cough Jenkins slipped away. But I scarcely noticed him at all.

Poor misguided girl!

My brain was buzzing like a devilish hive of bees, don't you know. By Jove, this was something *awful*!

And yet—and yet—Her frank, sweet face met mine with a clear light that there was no mistaking. There was no going behind it—she was a thoroughbred, a queen—a *lady*, dash it! I *knew* it! And I just settled on that, and was ready to die right then and there if any-

body dared to dispute it. I didn't care a jolly hang how she talked; it was just nothing—just the demoralizing swagger of a little boarding school girl trying to show off like her brothers. And her language? Why, just the devilish, natural result of having a coarse, slangy brute like Billings for a brother. Poor little girl! It was a beastly shame.

She was watching me curiously, smilingly, as she sat there, her devilishly pretty mouth puckered into a cherry as she softly whistled and drummed her shining nails upon the chair arm.

"I'm afraid I've shocked you," she said. "Jack says you're so good."

Dash it, somehow I felt humiliated! She said it in a way that made me feel like a silly ass, you know.

But she wasn't thinking about me any more. Her eye fell on the tabouret, and her little hand stretched toward it.

"May I?" she said with an arch inquiring glance. "Your cigarettes look good to me. I emptied my case an hour ago."

And I proffered them with a show of alacrity. "Pray pardon me," I said. "I—I never thought of you smoking." A chuckle came through the tiny teeth grasping the cigarette. "Thought I was too goody-goody, eh?"

I stammered something—dashed if I know what—and blinked a little gloomily as she drew a brisk fire from the flame I tendered.

Odd thing, by Jove; here I had been going to dinners, world without end, where fellows' wives and girls and sisters smoked cigarettes, and I never had thought a thing about it. But now, somehow, I didn't like it for *her*. Sort of thing well enough for other chaps' girls and sisters, you know, but—well, this was *different*, by Jove! Devilish queer thing, that, what a lot of things seem the caper for them that we don't like for "our own," eh?

And yet—oh, I say, she certainly did look fetching about it—downright bewitching, you know! I think maybe it was because she didn't fumble the thing as if she was afraid of it—as if it was just a red hot coal and going to burn her. Most of them do, you know. No, this

girl really seemed to enjoy it. Inhaled the whole thing at three draws and reached for another.

"Do—er—you smoke much?" I ventured anxiously. "Cigarettes, you know?"

She pulled a sparkling half-inch as she shook her little head. I felt awfully relieved. "Not for me," she remarked carelessly. "I prefer a pipe."

"*Pipe!*" I repeated feebly.

The golden head inclined. "Bet you! Good old, well seasoned brier for mine—well caked and a little strong." Puff—puff. "Oh, damn your patent sanitary pipes, I say!"

And as backward I collapsed upon the cushions, she threw her leg over the arm of her chair and shot two long cones of smoke from her dainty nostrils.

VI

A MOMENT later I had another shock.

"I don't blame you for looking at me so hard," she said, rubbing her chin and looking, I thought, a little confused. "For did you ever see a face like mine?"

"I—I never did!" I said stammeringly, for, by Jove, the question was so unexpected; but I knew I said it earnestly and with conviction in every word.

She nodded. "Never got a chance to shave, you know—caught the train by such a margin—and my kit's in that other bag. Guess I'll have to impose on you in the morning for one of your razors."

I stared at her in horror.

"Shave? You don't shave?" I protested blankly.

"Myself, you mean? Have to; I haven't got a man to do it for me." She seemed to sigh. "Not old enough yet to have a man, Jack says."

And just here her attention seemed to center on my cellarette over in the corner.

"Gee, but it's warm tonight, isn't it?" she remarked absently.

And there was nothing to do but take the hint or leave it; and after all, she was a guest, you know!

"Perhaps you will permit me to offer you some refreshment," I suggested, rising. I knew it sounded devilish stiff; and I knew, moreover, that I looked like a jolly muff, in fact.

"Perhaps I will," she chuckled. "Say, don't urge me too hard, Mr. Lightnut; you might embarrass me."

I did not want to embarrass her. "I thought perhaps a lemon soda would refresh you," I explained. "Or, if you will allow me, I will have Jenkins make you one of his famous seltzer lemonades. Perhaps, though, you would prefer just a plain—"

I halted in confusion, for she was laughing at me.

"A plain cup of tea," she gurgled, "or a *crème de menthe!*" And then her laughter burst deliciously. "Say, do you know, honestly, I'm only just getting on to that dry humor of yours. You've had me fooled. You do it with such a serious face, you know. Say, it's great!"

I tried to smile, but I knew it was a devilish sickly go—the more so, because just at that moment her slender fingers discarded the remnant of her last cigarette and reached for a cigar. Another instant, and she had deftly clipped and lighted it.

I decided I wouldn't ring for Jenkins.

I felt ashamed as I looked in the celarette, and wondered what the deuce I should offer her. Couldn't think of anything I had ever heard of boarding-school girls going in for except ice cream soda; and, dash it, I didn't have any ice cream soda. Nearest thing would be a little seltzer and ginger ale. That would do.

"Oh, I say, I'm going to make you a highball," I said, trying to assume a frisky, jocular air.

Her voice lifted in alarm. "Nay, nay, Clarence—not for me!" she urged hastily.

"But it's only—"

"No fizzy adulterations in mine—not on your life." She followed me across the room. "Just give me the straight, pure goods—anything, just so it's whiskey."

And before I could say a word—if, indeed, I could have said a word—she

had selected a decanter of Scotch, and with cigar tilted upward in her tender mouth, was absorbingly pouring a shining stream of the amber fluid.

To see the slow curving of that delicately molded wrist, the challenging flash of the saucy eyes of blue, by Jove, it made me just forget all about what she was doing till the fluid ran over the brim. And then, before I could intercept her, she had lightly gestured her glass to mine, and in a flash the stuff was gone.

Gone! A full whisky glass; and I recalled with a shiver of horror that it was very high proof liquor—something I seldom touched myself, but kept on hand for certain of my friends.

"I say, you know!" I gasped in consternation. "I'm awfully afraid that will—er—will—" I gulped wordlessly.

The coral lips curved scornfully.

"Get me jingled?" She looked as she might have if I had insulted her. "Maybe so in those girlie-girlie days you were trying to josh me about, but not since these two years I've been at college." She shook her lovely, bright head, and following a long enjoyable pull at the cigar, projected five perfect rings at a frescoed cherub in the ceiling. The exquisite eyes softened dreamily as under the spell of some pleasing thought—some tender reminiscence.

"Why, do you know," she said, looking at me earnestly, "when I was home for the holidays—" Then she paused. "Don't tell Brother Jack I told you this—will you, Mr. Lightnut? He's so sensitive about it."

"Certainly not," I said feelingly.

I thought the wistful face brightened.

"Well, when I was home, then, I put Brother Jack under the table two nights running; and you know that's going some!"

And smiling proudly, she poured out another!

But not any more, for I put away the decanter.

My brain was reeling, as they say in books; dash it, I was almost sick. Poor, poor little girl! And nobody to remonstrate with her. What a shame—what a shame!

By Jove, I wondered if she would listen to me!

I fixed my glass resolutely as we resumed our seats, and bent toward her earnestly.

"May I say something very seriously, Miss Billings?" I began nervously. "Without offense, you know—"

But she was off in a fit of chuckling. Most girls giggled, I had always heard, but she chuckled. Somehow, I liked it less than anything she did; it sounded so devilish ghastly, you know. And then it was so awfully embarrassing—oh, awfully. If you've never tried to remonstrate with a girl about her vicious habits and had her chuckle, you just can't imagine! I felt my cheeks flushing jolly red and looked down, and then I had to look somewhere else quickly, for I seemed to be staring rudely at the ends of the pajamas, where her feet, as the poet chap says, "like little mice, stole in and out—" only, in this case, they were thrust into bedroom slippers, that looked oddly like a pair of my own—but miles and miles smaller.

"Say, do you know," she was chortling, "the way you do get off that Willie boy sort of talk—oh!" And she placed her hand to her side as she laughed. "I can see how Jack thinks you're the greatest ever, Mr. Lightnut."

She leaned forward eagerly.

"Look here, I do *wish* you would let me call you 'Dicky.'"

"Oh, I say—will you?" It just exploded from my mouth.

"*Will I?*" Her look made my blood leap. "You just watch me—*Dicky!* Oh, say, this is great; maybe it won't take a fall out of old Jack—always bragging that you allow only two or three to call you that."

"I hope you will always call me Dicky," I said—and said it very softly. By Jove, I could hardly keep from taking her hand!

"You bet I think it's awfully good of you, Lightnut—I mean, Dicky." Then her face grew pensive. "Say, do you know, I need a friend like you—just now, I mean—oh, worst kind."

"Do you?" I said eagerly, and hitched nearer. She proceeded:

"Haven't you had things sometimes you wanted to talk about to somebody—well, things you couldn't just tell to your brother or sisters—oh, nor even your roommate? *You* understand." I wasn't sure that I did, for she was blushing furiously, and in her eyes was an appeal.

By Jove, some jolly love affair, I guessed suddenly. My heart just sank like a lump of what's-its-name, but my whole soul went out in sympathy for her. I made up my mind, then and there, to put myself aside.

"Devilish glad—I mean delighted to have you tell me anything," I murmured rather weakly; "but—er—I should think your mother—"

"The mater—tell her!" Her hand lifted. "She'd guy the life out of me!" She paced to the window and back.

I protested indignantly: "I don't see how any mother—"

"Aw, forget it!" she broke in, and I winced again at slang from those sweet lips. "No, sir; I'm going to unload the whole thing on *you*, or nobody."

And, by Jove, the next thing I knew she had perched on the broad arm of the Morris chair in which I sat, her arm resting lightly above my shoulders.

"Here's what I want to know about," I heard her sigh. "When you're engaged to one person and meet another you like better, how are you going to—well, chuck it with the first, you know—and still do the square thing? There, that's what's hit me, Dicky; and I'm up against it for fair!" Her hand gently patted my shoulder. "I'm telling you, old chap, because I know you'll understand—because I like you better than any man I ever saw—that's right!"

I was just afraid to move! Afraid she'd stop; afraid she'd go on. And all the while I was feeling happier than I ever had in all my life—happier than I ever knew people could be, you know. I never thought her bold—dash it, no—I knew it was just her adorable, delicious, Arcadian simplicity, by Jove! That explained it, just as it explained to me all her other unconventionalities.

"So now it's up to you," she said,

"and I want to know what's the answer."

The answer!

And how could I give her any answer? No, by Jove, I knew jolly well I couldn't take advantage of such circumstances—of her artless confession; knew devilish well it wouldn't do, you know. Might reproach me in years to come; and then—and then, there was Billings!

So I just contented myself with looking up smilingly, but it was hard—awfully, awfully hard, dash it—and I just felt like a jolly cad—or fool. Couldn't tell which.

VII

THIS beautiful creature had proposed to me!

By Jove, that's what it amounted to practically; and now, as she said, it was up to me. Yet I couldn't say a word!

"Well, what must I do about the other one?" she insisted.

The question reminded me of the entanglement to which her frank simplicity had confessed. And she expected me, of all others, to tell her what to do! I looked up into the radiant, crimsoned face as she bent forward slightly, her lips parted, her eyes eager—expectant. She was hanging upon my reply.

I coughed slightly. "That question is hardly fair, you know," I said meaningly. "You see, it hits me rather personally."

"Oh!" she said.

I nodded and tried to find her hand as I looked down.

"So that's where the shoe pinches!" And she whistled thoughtfully.

And just then my upward reaching hand found hers. And yet no, it couldn't be her hand, either; it felt like the crash cover of the cushion—rough and fibrous. And yet, by Jove, it was a hand, for it gave mine a grip that almost broke my fingers and then dropped them. By the time I looked up, I saw only her little palm resting upward on her knee.

It was funny; but I had other things to think about than puzzles.

She sighed. "Well, I'm the one that can feel for you, Dicky." Here the sigh

lifted and her laugh pealed like a chime of silver bells. "I guess Brother Jack doesn't know as much about your affairs as he thinks, does he—eh? Why, he told me you were more afraid of a girl than of a mad dog."

And a slapping grip fell on my shoulder that made me tingle from head to toe. And yet I wished she wouldn't do that; if she did it again, I should just lose my head—I knew I should.

But here she rose, stretched and dropped into the wicker armchair. She hitched it nearer to me.

"You see, it's like this," she began, assuming a confidential air. "You know my sister's up at school at Cambridge, too."

"At Radcliffe College—yes." I nodded.

"Why, yes. Well, it's her roommate!"

"Eh? I don't believe I—" I paused perplexedly.

"That's right—her roommate, I tell you! And in a day or two she's coming home with sis for a visit. I want you to come up for a week end—won't you—and look her over—I mean, see her and tell me what you think of her. You'll go crazy about her—oh, I know you will!"

I entered a protest. "Oh, I say now, you know, there's only one girl I ever saw I would care to look at twice."

She smiled adorably. "Oh, don't I know all about how you feel? But I just want you to see this girl—she's the prettiest and swellest that's been around Boston for many a day; and on Sunday morning she could give the flag to all the Avenue. Why, Dicky, she's from China!"

"China!" I must have looked the scorn I felt. "Oh, come now, you don't think a Chinese girl is—"

"Not Chinese, Dicky." In her eagerness, she moved so near, the silk of her pajamas brushed my hand. "She's English. Her dad's the British Governor General of Hong Kong—Colonel Francis Kirkland, you know—beefy-looking old chap with white mutton chops—I saw his picture."

Hong Kong! I wondered if she knew Mastermann, the chap who had sent me

the red pajamas. Why, dash it, of course she would; for this fellow Mastermann was out there on government business, and he and the Governor must be thrown together a good deal.

Her musical laugh broke in on my speculations. "But the funniest thing is, Dicky, her name's the same as mine."

Her name! By Jove, and until this moment, I had not thought—

"Oh, I say," I exclaimed eagerly, "what is your name, anyway?"

The lustrous eyes opened wide. "Why, you mean to say you don't know? Thought you knew I was named after the governor. And she's named after *hers*—Frances, from Francis, you know—just the difference in a letter. See?"

"Frances!" I murmured lingeringly. "So your name's Frances?"

"Yes, and hers is Frances—odd, isn't it?"

I assented, but I wished she would drop the other girl—I wasn't interested there, except just because she was.

Her bosom lifted with a sigh. "Don't you think Frances is a peach of a name?"

"It's heavenly!" I whispered. "And I'm glad to hear about your friend, too."

Her sweet face clouded. "Not much of a friend; she don't lose any sleep over me," she commented gloomily. "Then there's sis double-crossing me with her influence ever since I got hauled up before Prexy at Easter. Sis is awfully prissy."

Her tone was almost savage. I strained incredulously after her meaning.

"Did I understand you to say you were brought up before the president there at Radcliffe?"

"Radcliffe?" Her head shook. "No—Harvard." And I nodded, recalling the affiliation between the two institutions at Cambridge.

I wondered what silly, tyrannical straining of red tape discipline on someone's part had subjected this sensitive, refined girl to the humiliating ordeal of having to appear before the president of the college. Probably for plucking some trashy flower, or, at the worst, looking twice at some sappy freshman

acquaintance waving his hand from a frat house.

"By Jove, a devilish shame!" I ejaculated.

"I should say!" Her voice was aggrieved. "All for a measly prize fight."

"Prize fight!" I gasped.

She nodded brightly. "Oh, a modest one, you know—not, of course, a Jeffries-Johnson affair, but I tell you we had them going some for a round and a half. Athletics is my long suit—just you feel those biceps." And with sudden movement she swept upward the wide, silken sleeve, showing a limb like the lost arm of the Venus de what's-its-name.

"Go on—just feel it," she commanded, flexing the arm.

"I—I—" And I gulped and balked.

"Feel it, I tell you!" And I did.

And then I almost fell over, I received such a shock. For my fingers seemed to be clasping, not the soft, rounded contour I beheld, but a great massed protuberance, hard and unyielding as a bunch of dried putty. My fingers could not half span it.

I jerked them away, bewildered.

"Wonderful," I said faintly, and I batted perplexedly at the exquisite, symmetrical arm.

"Oh, that's nothing," she said indifferently, jerking down her sleeve. "I'm a little undertrained now; been putting in all my time on leg work. That's what counts in football."

"Football!" I questioned, astonished. "Why, I didn't know—"

"That I was on the team? Surest thing you know; that's why I've got all this mop of hair—comes below my collar—see?"

Her collar, indeed! It was easy to see that, if unbound, it would reach considerably below her waist. But *football*? Why, she must mean basketball, of course. I opened my mouth to remind her, when she proceeded:

"But I was going to tell you about this prize fight. Well, this fight was just a little one, you know. Purse of eighteen dollars; and we had to chip in afterward with an extra three to get Mug Kelly—that's the Charlestown

Pet, you know—to stand the gaff for a second round. Why, he was all in on the count at the end of the first round—what do you think of that?"

"But I say, you know—" I began, but she lifted her hand.

"I know—I know what you're going to say, Dicky; you think we were a bunch of easy marks. But how could we tell what my roommate was going to do to the Pet—we couldn't, you know."

"Your roommate!" I exclaimed aghast. "A—another young lady—in a pugilistic encounter? Oh, I say!"

She chuckled. "G'long; stop your kidding!" And she kicked playfully at me. Then she assumed a mincing air—finger on chin, lips pursed, and eyes rolling upward, you know.

"Yes, another sweet young peacherino—Miss Billings's little roommate—a beef that hits the beam at about two-sixty—Little Lizzie, you know."

"Lizzie!" I repeated vaguely.

"Oh, say, Dicky, cut it out; let me finish. Well, another minute, and the Pet would have been put to sleep, but just then the coppers nailed us." She added gloomily: "And that's what queered me with sis. Fierce, ain't it?"

She sighed and her beautiful lashes drooped sadly.

By Jove, I was so jolly floored I couldn't manage a word. I knew, of course, that my heart was broken, but it didn't matter. I loved her just the same; I should always love her; and she had tried to let me know she loved me better than any man she had ever met. What the deuce did anything else matter, anyhow? We would marry and go out on a ranch or something of that sort, where the false, polished what-you-call-it of civilization didn't count, and no rude rebuff or sneer of society would ever chill her warm impulsiveness.

She smiled archly: "See here, Dicky, I thought we were going to tell each other the story of our lives. Your turn now; tell me how she looks to you, this girl that came at last—there's always the one girl comes at last, they say, if you wait long enough. Go on—tell me—what's she like?"

"Of course, you don't know!" I said significantly.

"Me? Of course I wouldn't know—I want you to tell me. Say, is she really so pretty?"

"Pretty," indeed! It was like this adorable child of nature not to understand that she was the most perfect and faultless creation on earth!

I leaned toward her. "Is she pretty?" I repeated reproachfully.

She eyed me slyly.

"Oh, of course I know how *you* feel," she said, "but draw me a *picture* of her."

"A picture!" I laughed. "All right, here goes: Eighteen, 'a daughter of the gods, divinely tall and most divinely fair'—that sort of thing. Features classic—perfect oval, you know, and profile to set an artist mad with joy. Eyes? Blue as Hebe's, but big and true and tender; hair, a great, shining nugget of virgin gold. Form divine—the ideal of a poet's dream—the alluring, the elusive, the unattainable, the despair of the sculptor's chisel."

"My!" said Miss Billings, staring.

But I was not through. "Complexion? Her skin as smooth as the heart of a seashell and as delicately warm as its rosy blush when kissed by the amorous tide."

"Gee!" ejaculated my darling.

I looked at her closely. "And in one matchless cheek a dimple divine such as might have been left by the barbed arrow of Cupid when it awoke Psyche from her swoon of death. In short, she might be the dainty fairy princess of our childhood fantasies, were she less superb in figure. On the other hand, she might be the sunny-haired daughter of a Viking king, were she not too delicately featured and molded."

That was all I could remember from the description as I had read it in a novel, but I was glad I had stored it up, by Jove, for it suited her to a dot. She didn't say a word for a moment, but just sat there eying me kind of sidewise, her little upper lip lifted in an odd way. Then of a sudden she shook her head and swung her knees up over the arm of her chair.

"Well, Dicky, as a describer you

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sure are the slushy spreader. Say, you've got Eleanor Glyn backed off the boards."

She went on eagerly: "I don't care, though; slushy or not, your picture's just perfect for *her*. Why, your girl must be a ringer for the girl at Radcliffe. Only thing you left out was the freckle on the chin."

Freckle on the chin! By Jove, I left it out on purpose, for I thought she might not like it. I wondered if all girls at Radcliffe had freckles on the chin.

She lay back, regarding me inscrutably. "If she looks like that," she sighed, "you ought to love her very much, Dicky."

I couldn't say anything, for words are so deuced inadequate, you know. But I just made an effort to look it all.

"Of course," sighing, "you ought to feel that way; and, another thing, Dicky: you'll never forget where you first saw her, will you? One of the things one never forgets."

"Right in this room," I murmured; "and in that wicker chair."

"Really?" Her surprised ejaculation was delicious. By Jove, how entrancingly coquettish of her! How jolly clever!

"Go on; tell me how she was dressed—never mind any more picture business; just tell me in four or five words. Bet you can't do it!"

In her eyes was a challenge and I took it up.

"In black silk pajamas," I said daringly.

Her blue eyes opened wide. For a moment I feared she would be offended at my audacity, but her birdlike carol of laughter reassured me.

"Say, *you're* not so slow, *are you?*"

And her hand came down on my knee with a force that made me jump. She slipped over again to the arm of my chair.

"Only shows," she gurgled merrily, "how little Jack knows about you. Say, you'd better never tell *him* about those black pajamas!"

She spoke chokingly through a storm of laughter as she rocked there against my shoulder.

"And say—the joke of it!" She

banged me on the back with a clublike blow incredible from that little hand. "The joke of it is, he thought I'd be so safe with you! Oh, mamma!"

And off she went again.

I shifted uneasily. I did not like it—her merriment over what was perfectly obvious and rational. Of course, Billings knew she would be safe. Why the deuce shouldn't he?

But the matter of the pajamas was another thing. Her receiving me in them was a contingency I could not possibly have anticipated and avoided, and yet a withdrawal because of them or even because of her presence here had been shown to be a course inexplicable to her. She was too innocent, too ingenuous, too *ingénue* to understand that I was invading the sanctuary of her privacy. Yet to have taken any course that would have appeared to make correction of her error come from me would have been appallingly caddish and cruel. No, the best course had seemed to be to go right on—take no notice—and then, as soon as she retired, slip away to the club. That seemed the gentlemanly thing.

Yet now her words implied a certain consciousness that her brother might frown upon her attire, might even visit me with reproach. I was troubled, and her next speech was not calculated to reassure me.

"But I'll—I'll never say a word, Dicky," she said, coming out of her laughter and panting breathlessly. "Never! And don't *you*, Dicky—don't you ever. Understand? Mum's the word!"

I looked up distressfully to protest, but her little head was shaking earnestly, the long, delicate hair wisps about her forehead wavering like tiny, curling wreaths of golden smoke.

"No, sir," she emphasized soberly; "if you ever let *that* cat out of the bag, it'll be all up with *me*—I mean Jack will never let me come again. You must promise me."

"But—"

"Oh, but me no 'buts'—*promise!*"

"Why, then—er—of course," I faltered, "if you wish it."

"That's right, because I want to come again—that is, if you *want* me. But if Brother Jack was on to you, Dicky, as I am, he would sooner have me at a hotel, that's all."

"But my dear Frances—"

"I tell you I *know*, Dicky; he doesn't approve of young ladies in pajamas." She chuckled. "Not even black ones."

She stood up, looking at herself and performing a graceful pirouette before the long pier glass.

"Now, if they had been crimson," she proceeded, "he might have felt different. Old Jack's great on Harvard, and so am I."

Of course. All Radcliffe girls were, I knew.

By Jove, how I wished I could show her the lovely crimson pajamas Mastermann had sent me from China! But I would have to summon Jenkins to find them, and besides, it would be of questionable taste to present them to her attention.

"Great idea, this, having pajamas in your college colors," she said. I thought so, too, as I noted admiringly the rich effect of her golden head above the black silk. But I thought the color a devilish odd one—somber, you know—for colors of a young girl's school.

Suddenly she yawned, stretched her arms above her head, and flashed me a dazzling smile. By Jove, in the loose fitting garments she looked for all the world like an Oriental houri, or some jolly lovely thing like that.

"Gee, but I'm sleepy!" she said behind her little hand. "If you'll excuse me, Dicky, I believe it will be off to the springs—the bed springs, for little Frankie. Good night, then. See you in the morning."

And with another radiant smile, she moved toward her room.

"Good night," I said wistfully.

By Jove, somehow I had hoped she would offer to kiss me now that we were engaged in a way. But then, of course, it wouldn't do—she knew that. So ought I. Perhaps in the morning at the boat!

And the door closed behind her. I stood blinking after her a moment; then

I fixed my attention gloomily upon the cellarette. Poor little girl and her foolish—but adorably foolish—college bravado! Sorrowfully I locked the cellarette and dropped the key in my pocket.

Then I locked the outer doors of the hall and apartment, leaving the keys unmolested on the inside. On the whole, I decided I would not have up the janitor's gossipy wife.

Next I sought Jenkins at the back.

"We will lock up back here, Jenkins, and go over to my rooms at the club for the night."

Jenkins stared fixedly over my head. "Certainly, sir."

"And Jenkins—h'm!" I crumpled a bill into his mechanical palm. "You will never allude to having seen that sweet—um—you understand, Jenkins? Never seem to remember, even to me, that you ever saw anyone up here tonight."

"Certainly not, sir," indignantly. "I wouldn't, anyhow."

Yet his eyes, rolling back from the ceiling, seemed to hold me oddly for an instant. In them was a touch of sadness.

"But may I speak of that Mr. Billings, sir? You know, if he comes—"

"Jenkins!" sharply.

"Certainly, sir!" Jenkins's mouth closed, traplike.

But all in vain my early rise the next morning, my careful toilet and my dash in a taxi to a florist and then to Tiffany's for a ring. At the pier I dodged about in the crowd, the boy trailing behind me with the big purple box, but not a devilish thing could I see of Frances. By Jove, I almost broke my monocle straining! At last I was sure she must be left, for the last passengers were passing over the gangplank.

"Hello, Dicky!"

The voice, coarse and hearty, came from an athletic young man in a hurrah suit. On his head, perched jauntily above a mass of yellow hair, was a straw hat with a crimson band.

I stared at him through my glass, but it was not anyone I knew at all. I looked at him coldly, for there's nothing

so devilish annoying as familiarities from strangers. I thought I could freeze him off. I usually can, you know.

But he only grinned. "Looking for Miss Billings?"

"I—I haven't seen her," I answered stiffly. But his question alarmed me.

He chuckled in my face. "Guess you don't know her in her clothes, eh, Dicky?" And I did not need the punch he gave me in the side to make me stagger backward. "A thousand thanks, and good-bye, old chap. I see they're hauling in the plank."

He lingered for one quick, bearlike grab at my hand.

"And say, don't forget—for I know Jack Billings better than you do—don't ever let him know about all that Scotch last night."

He called over his shoulder with a grin: "Keep it dark—as dark as those black pajamas, Dicky!"

And as long as I could see, he stood on the deck, waving his hat at me as I stood there with my mouth open, my eyes following him with horror.

By Jove, who was he, and what did he know?

VIII

"Good night, Dicky!" came up the elevator shaft. And then more "good nights," growing fainter with their laughter as the car shot down.

"Good night," I called after them. "Devilish sorry you fellows won't stay longer!"

"Jolly good lie, Jenkins," I said, yawning sleepily as I dropped back into my own apartment.

"Yes, sir," assented Jenkins demurely. "It's sleeping on the divan the other night, sir. Eight hours there ain't nothing like eight hours in bed and in your pajamas."

"Pajamas!" I ejaculated, startled.

For all day I had been thinking of *her*. I wondered if Billings would happen to think to invite me up for the week end. But he had so many times, and I had never gone.

"By Jove, that reminds me," I said. "Those red silk pajamas!"

"Yes, sir." Jenkins's face hardened in an odd, wooden way.

"I was wondering, Jenkins, if those pajamas were torn any in our little row the other night."

Poor Jenkins winced a little. "I think not, sir," he muttered humbly—"leastwise, they were all right last night when Mr.—" He seemed to catch himself abruptly. "I mean when I found them this morning, sir."

He returned with the garments I had received from Mastermann, and again we spread them under the lamp on the table. They looked singularly smooth and unwrinkled. There was not a single tear or break, not even with the delicate cords that twisted to form the frogs of the coat.

"My, sir! But ain't they red!" breathed Jenkins. "Them cords look like little red snakes."

I cut an anxious glance at Jenkins, for I did not like his reference to snakes. Seemed ominous, somehow. But his appearance was composed and reassuring. And, by Jove, come to look, the cords did look just like tiny, coiled serpents of glowing fire. Why, they were so jolly red they hurt your eyes. Fact! And thin as the beautiful stuff was, this brighter red ran all over the other, covering every inch of it and forming the closest, finest what-you-call-it embroidery. It was as faint and dainty a pattern as that on a soap bubble! Fact is, I could not trace it, even without my glass.

The only part that wasn't covered with this embroidery business was the stuff used to cover the knots, or little balls, over which the cords were meant to hook. In working with some of these cords, idly fastening and unfastening them, I got a little impatient with one that seemed tight, you know, and I used my manicure knife to pull the knot through.

"Careful, sir," warned Jenkins. "Likely to cut something."

By Jove! No sooner said, than I did it!

The dashed blade slipped somehow and cut into the little threads that tied the covers or caps or whatever-you-call-

'ems, over the knots. And when I pulled, the beastly piece of silk came off in my fingers.

And then—oh, but I say! I just gave a sort of yell and dropped the whole thing!

Ever have some silly ass try to scare you by poking a red hot cigar at you in the dark? Know how you jerk back? Well, there you are! For, give you my word, when I peeled off the little cloth cap, regular blazes of crimson fire seemed to shoot from the end of the knot.

Fact is, it wasn't a knot at all, but a button—a devilish glassy button, something bigger than a dime, perhaps, and thick as the end of your little finger. And there it lay against the silk, burning its way through it like a red coal of fire.

Dashed if it didn't look that way, anyhow. I just sat there blinking like a jolly owl, waiting to see the stuff begin to smoke, before I had presence of mind to tell Jenkins to touch it to see if it would burn.

But Jenkins wouldn't. He just stood there with his jaw hanging and his eyes bulging like champagne corks!

And it was just then that Billings rolled in.

I say "rolled in," because it always looks that way. That's the way Billings is built, you know.

"I say, Dicky," he panted, "just missed another infernal express! Plenty more trains, but I had a great inspiration strike me that I'd let you put me up for the night. Hat, Jenkins! Now, don't say a word, Dicky, old chap. Cane, Jenkins! Great pleasure, assure you—won't inconvenience me at all. Gloves, Jenkins! Just give me something to sleep in, and I'll be as comfortable here as I would be at the club—so don't worry any about me, old chap. By the way, want to thank you for taking care of the kid. Got home all right, I understand."

He plunked like a jolly elephant into the largest and most comfortable chair in the room and wheezed for breath.

"And, Jenkins!" He raised one fat finger while he took a gasp. "Don't

mind if I do have a package of Dicky's Koroskos and a sloe fizz—not too sweet, you know; and you may—"

He halted, his eyes suddenly riveted to the table, and straightened inquiringly, his big hands poised upon the padded arms of the chair.

"Suffering Thomas cats! What's that?" he exclaimed. "The scream there—flag of Morocco?"

And then without pausing for reply, he dashed on:

"I say, old chap, if you're picking up those, I can get you a few for nothing. You know Higgins, cashier—that-was of the Widows' National, eh? Well, Higgins sent the governor a Morocco flag the other day from Tangier. Fact is, he sent one to every director of the bank—and an extra large one to that bank examiner!"

He chuckled wobblingly, like a jolly jellyfish.

"Talk about a red flag to a bull," he exploded, "why, they—"

Billings broke off suddenly. Then he climbed heavily to his feet, and without warning, heaved himself across the room and seized the button I had just uncovered. Dashed if he didn't almost upset me.

"Here, I say!" I protested. "Don't lose that cap." I picked it up from where he had jerked it to the floor. "It's the cover to hide that glass, you know."

"Wh-a-a-t!"

Billings swung round, staring at me with the most curious expression.

"See here, Dicky," he exclaimed rather excitedly, but in a low tone, as he cut a side glance at Jenkins siphoning the fizz over at the cellarette. "What in thunder have you been doing now?"

By Jove, I turned cold for a minute, I was that startled. I thought he was going to use the pajamas as an introduction for reference to last night. But in a minute I saw that he did not mean that.

"Where on earth did *you* get anything like this?" And he held up the button and the garment.

"Oh, I say now!" I remonstrated, alarm changing to a mild dudgeon. Billings's devilish rude manners are so

offensive at times. "What do you mean? It's a present from a friend in China."

"Present!" Billings's eyes bulged queerly. He stooped toward me, whispering: "Did he know what this button was?"

"Why, of course he didn't," I answered indignantly. "Never dreamed of it, of course. I tell you, it was all nicely covered, was what-you-call-it—upholstered, you know—with devilish nice silk. I cut it off accidentally, trying to force the thing through that loop. That left the marble exposed."

Billings took the glass mechanically from the tray tendered by Jenkins and sipped it slowly, eying me curiously over the top. Then he set it back, very deliberately wiped his mouth with the bit of napery, and without taking his glance from me, waited until Jenkins had left the room. Whereupon, after another searching look at the button, he dropped it with the garment upon the table, and with hands jammed deep in his pockets, faced me with a long drawn whistle.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" he exclaimed. Just a coarse, vulgar outburst, you know—no sense to it; no point at all, you know—that's Billings.

He caught up the coat again. "And these others—four of them—are they just the same?" he demanded sharply.

"Dash it, how should I know? I suppose so," I answered indifferently. And I closed my eyes and leaned back, feeling a bit—just a bit—weary. Somehow, Billings is always so exhausting when he gets started on something.

"Oh, cut it out, old chap," I protested, drowsy-like.

"I will," I heard him say. Then I guess I must have dropped off a bit, for the next thing I knew he was shaking me.

"Dicky! Dicky! Say, look here! Look, I tell you!"

I did look, and—well, I was jolly vexed, that's all."

"Oh, I say now!" I spoke severely—just that way, you know. I went on, remonstrating: "Devilish silly joke, if you ask me. You've gone and ruined the thing, Billings! Flashy buttons

like that, you know—too tawdry, too cheap."

"*Cheap!*" He almost shouted it. Then he leaned over the back of the leather chair and pounded his fat head against the cushions, writhing his big bulk from side to side.

"Quite impossible," I said firmly. "Not *en règle* at all, you know!" And I fixed my glass and stared gloomily at the things. The five shiny buttons just lay there against the delicate silk like so many fiery, crimson cherries. And they reminded me of something—something—what the deuce was it? Something devilish familiar, whatever it was. And then of a sudden I had it!

"By Jove, you know!" And I just fell back in consternation. "This is awful! I'd look like a—er—dashed human cocktail. Oh, I say!"

Then Billings, who was already gasping like a jolly what's-its-name, dropped upon the arm of the chair and held his side.

"Dicky, you—you'll be the death of me yet," he panted.

I never try to follow Billings. Nobody ever does. So I paid no attention to him. Shaking his head, he lifted the garment again and held it out of the direct rays of the shaded lamp. The five buttons leaped out of the shadow like port lights down the bay on a moonless night.

He leered at me, chuckling. "Look *cheap* to you, eh? What you might call *outré*, so to speak—that it?"

"By Jove, of course," I answered ruefully. "I can't sleep in the things now, you know. What would people say?"

Billings stared at me disagreeably a moment and said something under his breath. Then he caught up the buttons and the silk, and crushing them in his hands, buried his face in the mass.

"Oh you beauties, you darlings!" I heard him murmur.

Then he looked at the buttons again, and dash it, he kissed one. Maudlin—jolly maudlin, I say, if you ask me!

"I say, Dicky," he said carelessly. "You may not care for them, but I've taken rather a shine to these buttons. Mind letting me have one, eh?"

He flashed a quick glance at me and then away.

"Mind? Why, certainly not; take 'em all, old chap, and welcome." Yet I responded gloomily enough, scarcely polite, you know. And I felt too jolly prostrated to be curious as to what he could possibly want with the things. Waistcoat buttons, likely—Billings was given to loud dress and other bounder stunts. But he just sat there looking down after I spoke, and presently stole a queer glance at me.

"Dicky," he said, and paused. Then he fished out that perfectly impossible pipe of his and began to pack it, slowly shaking his head. "Dicky, anybody that would take advantage of you would lift a baby's milk gurgler."

Of course, I saw no more sense in that than you do, you know, but I understood that in his crude, vulgar way he meant some sort of a compliment.

"Dash it, of course," I said offhand, straightening up and recrossing my legs. I always say that and do that way when fellows say stupid things. Such a jolly good way to keep from hurting their feelings, you know, and saves talking and thinking. Got on to it myself.

Billings's eye ranged at me as he lighted his pipe. The smoke seemed to make him cough, and it was this, I suppose, that set him chuckling.

He suddenly held up the row of red buttons again.

"Look here, you blessed dodo," he exclaimed brusquely. "Have you really no idea what these are, these glass buttons you are yapping about? Of course you haven't, you jolly chowder head, but I'm going to tell you."

He threw the coat into my lap.

"They are rubies, old man, that's all," he said quietly. "Oriental rubies, at that—flawless and perfect—the rarest and most precious things in the world."

IX

I STARED blankly at Billings. "Rubies!" I gasped.

He nodded. "Genuine pigeon bloods, my son, no less."

"Oh, come now, Billings," I protested. I felt a little miffed, just a little, you know. So jolly raw to try it on that way.

"By Jove, old chap, you must think me a common ass," I suggested disgustedly.

Billings grinned at the very idea.

"*You* a common ass, Dicky?" he ejaculated. "Nobody who knows you would ever think that, old man."

"But, I say—"

"See here, Dicky boy, I'm in dead earnest," he interrupted eagerly. "Don't you remember my one fad—gems? Got enough tied up in them to build two apartment houses as big as this. Best amateur collection in New York, if I do say it. But I haven't anything like one of these rubies, and neither has anyone else—no one else in this country, anyhow. There's nothing like them in all New York, from Tiffany's down to Maiden Lane, and never has been. I never saw anything like—near like any of them—except the one in the Russian crown of Anna Ivanovna. That's bigger, but it hasn't the same fire."

I just laughed at him. "Why, Billings, these pajamas were sent me by a friend in China, and I assure you—"

"Assure? What can you assure—what do *you* know about it?" said Billings rudely. "What did your friend know, or the one he had these things from—or the one before him—or the one still before that? Pshaw!" And he snapped his fingers.

With his hand he swept up the little caps and the long, wirelike threads that held them and sniffed the handful curiously.

"H'm! Funky sort of aromatic smell—balsam, cedar oil or something like that," he muttered half aloud. "That accounts for the preservation. But still—"

He crossed his legs and puffed thoughtfully.

"Tell you how I figure this out, Dicky," he said finally. "These nightmares your friend has sent you are awfully rare and old; and for delicate, dainty elegance and that sort of thing they've got everything else in the silk way

shoved off the clothes line. But as to these jewels, you can just bet all you've got that whoever passed them on was not wise to them being under these covers."

Here he got to looking at one of the buttons and murmuring his admiration—regular trance, you know.

"By Jove!" I remarked, just to stir him up. And he unloaded a great funnel of smoke and continued:

"My theory is that during some danger, some mandarins' war, likely, somebody got cold feet about these jewels and roped them in with these bits of silk—see how different they are from the rest of the stuff! Then, when the roughhouse came, these pajamas were swept along in the sacking—sort of spoils of pillage, you know. It was a clever method of concealment—clever because simple—a hiding place unlikely to be thought of because right under the eye. You recall Poe's story of 'The Purloined Letter'?"

I tried to remember. "Can't say I do, dear boy," I had to admit. "Don't seem to place that one. Only one I remember hearing him tell is that one he brought back from Paris. Let me see—the 'Story of the Lonely Lobster,' I think he called it." I chortled delightedly as it came back to me. "By Jove, that was devilish neat! Don't know when I've ever heard—"

An offensive remark by Billings interrupted me.

"Here, Dicky, Dicky, what do you think you're talking about?" he added rudely. Evidently his mind had wandered from the subject. So I replied with dignity—dignity, with just a touch of sarcasm:

"Pogue — 'Mickey' Pogue of our club. Perhaps you don't know Mickey Pogue?" And, by Jove, that fetched him! He stared at me a moment, and then, getting up, he reached over and solemnly shook me by the hand.

"Dicky," he said, wagging his head, "I apologize. You take the *brioche!*" And he turned his back a second.

I asked Billings how much he thought one of the rubies was worth. I had in mind how devilish hungrily he had

looked at them. But he sighed, then frowned and answered impatiently:

"That's it! That's the trouble about all the rare and beautiful things of this life! Always some debasing, prohibitive sordid money value, dammit!"

He squinted at the stones again and let the weight of one rest upon his finger. He shook his head, sighing.

"Well, they're over twenty carats each, and therefore, of course, many times the value of first water diamonds. After you get above five carats with real Oriental rubies, diamonds are not in it."

With an abrupt gesture he pushed the things away and rose. His pipe had gone out, but I noticed that he did not relight it. I held the gems full in the rays of the lamp, and Billings paused, holding a hungry gaze over his shoulder.

"I say, Billings, how much did you say one was worth?" I asked carelessly. For a moment he did not reply, but muttered to himself.

"I didn't say," he finally replied, and rather crossly. Then he whirled on me impulsively. "See here, Lightnut," he exclaimed, "if you'll let me have one of those for my collection, I'll give you twenty-five thousand for it—there!"

He gulped and continued:

"I'll have to make some sacrifices, but I don't mind that. I—"

But I shook my head. Really, I could hardly keep from laughing in his face.

"Sorry! Can't see it, old chap," I said. "Wouldn't sell one of them at any price."

Billings gulped again. "I suppose not; don't blame you. Way you're fixed, you don't have to." He walked slowly to the window and back. "Take my advice, Dicky, and get those fire coals into your safe deposit vault first thing in the morning. Hello, you're cutting them off! That's wise."

For with the knife he had left on the table I was cutting away the tough threads that held the rubies. I cut off the second and fourth, leaving the first ruby at the collar and the other two alternates.

"Go on," said Billings, as I laid down the knife. "You've only removed two."

"Don't believe I'll cut off any more,"

I said. "Want you to help me tie up the others just as they were."

"What!"

I insisted. And though Billings protested and argued and even called me names, we did as I said.

For, by Jove, you know it was perfectly clear that if they had been safe so long under the little covers, the jewels couldn't find any better place. Singular thing Billings couldn't see it. Besides, the pajamas had to have fastenings, you know.

I held one of the two rubies under the light, and, by Jove, I almost dropped it—did drop my glass. Seeing a red hot poker point in your fingers would give you the same turn.

"Rippers, Billings! Simply rippers!" I exclaimed.

I held the other ruby beside its fellow. Then I waited, listening, and I heard Billings's hand strike down on the back of a chair.

"I guess I'll be going, old chap," he said gruffly. "Think I'd better, after all." He cleared his throat. "Sure you can't sell me one, Dicky?" Dashed if his voice didn't tremble.

"Quite sure, dear boy," I murmured, without turning around. "Not mine, you know—these two."

Billings exploded then. It seemed an opportunity to relieve himself. "Not yours! Why, you dod-gasted idiot, you nincompoop, you cuckoo, you chicken head! What notion have you got in that fool's noddle now? If those rubies are not yours, whose do you think they are?"

I whirled about quickly. "Yours," I said, and laid them in his hand.

"My compliments, old chap," I added, smiling. By Jove! One time, at least, I put it all over old Billings!

"No!" he gasped, crouching over and gripping my shoulder.

I grinned cheerfully.

He fell into a chair and just sat there mouthing at me and then at the jewels in his hand. Old boy looked devilish silly. Really acted like he had some sort of stroke—that sort of thing.

I laughed at him.

"Don't you see?" I said, trying

to explain. "Wouldn't have known a dashed thing about the buttons being rubies but for you. So lucky they came to me so I can get a chance to help out your collection. Awfully glad, old chap."

He clenched the jewels in his hand and looked down.

"Dicky—" He coughed a little huskily as he paused. "Dicky." His voice was so low I could hardly hear him. "Dicky, you're off your trolley, and I'm damned—"

He raised his arm and dropped it.

"Well, never mind what," he finished with a lift of the shoulders. "But I want to say something. It's about what I offered you for those stones. The price—the amount I named—wasn't even a decent gamble; but it was all I could go, and oh, I wanted one so badly, Dicky! And now you've made me feel like a dog. And I can't take your gift, old chap, any more than I could afford to offer you the real value of one of these beautiful stones. Here." And he passed them back to me.

"I *know* each of them to be worth anywhere from forty to fifty thousand dollars," he said quietly. "They're the kind the crowned heads scoop for jewels of state."

I nodded, and, getting up carelessly, I strolled to a window.

"Devilish lovely night," I said, poking my head out. And it was. Stars overhead and all that sort of thing, and lots of them below, too—I could hear them singing over on Broadway.

"All right, old chap; then here they go into the street," I said. "If my friend can't have 'em, then no jolly crowned heads shall. That's flat!"

Billings started forward with a regular scream.

I waved him back. "Don't come any nearer, old chap," I said, holding my arm out of the window, "or, dash me, I'll drop them instantly. Six stories, you know—stone flagging below."

"But Dicky—"

"If you don't say you'll take 'em, time I count three, I'll give 'em a toss, by Jove! One!"

"Here, Dicky! Don't be a—"

"Two!" I counted. No bluff, you know; I meant jolly well to do it.

"Just one word—one second, Dicky!" he yelled. "Let me off with one, then. Dicky! Dicky, old chap! Be a good sportsman!"

I hesitated. Dash it, one hates to take an advantage.

Billings stretched out his arm appealingly. "Do, old chap," he pleaded. "Give me just one—one only!"

His hand shook like a quivering what's-its-name leaf.

I yielded reluctantly: "Oh, well then, call it off with one," I said. And with a sigh I tossed him one of the rubies and dropped the other in the pocket of my smoking jacket. Billings wiped his forehead, and then he thanked me and wiped his eyes.

"So good of you to give in, old chap," he snuffled. "Never will forget you for it!"

"Oh, I say, chuck it, you know!" I protested.

"Whole family will thank you," he went on in his handkerchief. "Princely magnanimity and all that sort of thing—you'll just *have* to come up for the week end with me this—"

"I *will*!" I reached forward eagerly and insisted on shaking hands. By Jove, what luck!

And Billings looked regularly overcome. All he could do was just shake his head and pump my arm. Why, dash it, this seemed to affect him more even than giving in about the ruby. It was the first time I had ever accepted his invitation, you know.

"Tell you what, old chap," he said, as soon as he could speak. "I'm going to tell you what to do with that other stone. You save that for *her*."

"Her!" By Jove, I was so startled I lost the grip on my monocle. Billings nodded emphatically.

"Yes, sir—for *her*; she'll be along one of these days."

"By Jove, you know!" I was almost dizzy with a sudden idea. I fished out the jewel and held it before my glass, squinting doubtfully at it. I wondered if it was *good* enough for "*her*."

"I say, Billings," I murmured

thoughtfully. "Blondes or brunettes, you know—which wear rubies?"

"Both!" He said it with a kind of jaw snap. "They wear anything in the jewel line they can freeze on to."

"But which—"

"The worst? Blondes, my boy—blondes, every time; especially those going around in black." Billings spoke gloomily. "Let me tell you, my boy—and I *know*—don't you ever have anything to do with a blonde if she's in black, especially black silk—hear?"

By Jove, his uplifted finger and fierce way of saying it gave me a regular turn, you know. But then there was the ruby, and I was thinking that—

"Perhaps the four of them in a bracelet," I muttered, "with something else to help out. They *might* do."

"They might," said Billings in a tone of coarse sarcasm. "They might do for a queen!"

I flashed a quick look at him. "Just what *I* was thinking," I answered gently.

"Meantime," said Billings, yawning, "let's go to bed."

And just as I rang for Jenkins I suddenly was seized with a perfectly ripening idea that checked a long yawn right in the middle and almost broke my jaw. For I saw how I could do something handsome that would even up with Billings in a way for the ruby he wouldn't take.

"Tell you what, old chap," I said, slapping him on the shoulder, "you are going to have them tonight!"

"Have — have what?" burst from him. "Rubies? I tell you I won't take another—"

"Rubies!" I ejaculated contemptuously. "Rubies nothing! Something better—something worth while, dash it!"

I saw he would never guess it.

"Why, you shall sleep in the pajamas from China," I exclaimed. And gathering them, I placed them in his hands.

"By George, Dicky!" Billings's face showed feeling. "How infernally clever of you, old chap! How thundering timely, too!"

He held them up singly, studying their outlines critically.

"And see here, Dicky—why, great Thomas cats!" His eyes turned on me wonderingly. "Never noticed it before—did you? But I do believe they are just my size!"

His size! By Jove, I had forgotten all about the item of size! I just collapsed into a chair as he said good night, and sat there blinking in a regular stupefaction of horror as his door closed behind him.

For he was devilish sensitive about his bulk, and I dared not say a word.

X

"Oh, but I say, it's impossible, you know!" And I stared at Jenkins incredulously.

He grinned foolishly. "I know, sir; but he's in 'em, just the same, and I must say they do fit lovely—just easy-like."

"By Jove!" I gasped helplessly. "Then the jolly things must be made of rubber, that's all! Why, look here, he weighs over three hundred pounds, you know!"

Jenkins's head wagged sagaciously. "I think that's how it is, sir; it's wonderful what they do with rubber now; my brother wears a rubber cloth bandage that ain't no bigger 'round than my arm when it's off of him, and he—"

"Dare say," I said sleepily as I fell back upon my pillow. "Good night, Jenkins; hope you'll get enough sleep to make up for the other night."

Jenkins sighed as he punched out the light. "Thank you, sir—and good night," he murmured.

How long I slept I cannot tell, as they say in stories, you know; but I was brought jolly wide awake by a light that shone through the bedroom's open door. For if there's one thing will wake me quicker than everything else it's a light in the room at night. Fact is, I always want it as black as the what's-its-name cave, or else I can't sleep. And this light came from the small electric stand on

the writing desk. I could tell that by the way it shone.

And just then the little silver gong in there chimed three. Jolly rum hour for anybody to be up unless they were having some fun or were sick. So I raised my head and called softly:

"Jenkins—er—Billings!"

No answer. Reluctantly I swung out and stepped within the next room. Not a soul there, by Jove! Then I moved over to Billings's door, which was wide open for coolness, like my own. I could not see the shadowed alcove in which the bed was placed, and so I stood there hesitating, hating awfully to risk the possibility of disturbing him, don't you know. And just then my eyes, ranging sleepily across the room toward the private hall, were startled by the apparition of an open doorway.

Startled, all right! And yet, by Jove, I was in such a jolly fog, I just stood there, nodding and batting at it for a full minute before I could take it in.

"What I call devilish queer," I decided. I walked over and stuck my head out into the dark hall.

"Billings! Jenkins!" I whispered.

By Jove, not a word! Everything as silent as the tomb!

I didn't like it a bit—so mysterious, you know. Besides, dash it, the thing was getting me all waked up! I just knew if once I got excited and thoroughly awake, it would take me nearly ten minutes to get to sleep again. And, by Jove, just then the excitement came, for I got hold of the fact after I had stared at it a while, that the door of my apartment opening into the outer corridor was standing ajar. Why, dash it, it was not only standing, it was moving. Then suddenly the broad streak of light from the corridor widened under the impulse of a freshening breeze, and the door swung open with a bang.

And then I heard my name spoken.

By Jove, I had been standing there with my mouth open, bobbing my head like a silly dodo; but, give you my word, I was suddenly wide awake as a jolly owl wagon!

Away down the corridor, by the mail

chute, a man was standing, reading a framed placard. Nothing particularly remarkable in this, but as the door banged he turned his head sharply and ejaculated:

"Dammit! Now, that will wake Lightnut!"

I was surprised, because I couldn't recall ever having seen him before; yet, standing as he did under the light, I had opportunity for a devilish good view.

He was a heavy set old party, rather baldish, with snowy mutton chops and a beefy complexion that was jolly well tanned below the hatband line, you know. The kind of old boy you size up as one of the prime feeder sort and fond of looking on the wine when it is Oporto red. Had something of the cut of the retired India colonels one sees about the Service clubs in London—straight as a lamp post still, but out of training and in devilish need of tapping—that sort of duck, you know!

What a respectable-looking old party might be up to, wandering around a bachelor apartment building at three in the morning, was none of my business. What's more, you know, I didn't care a jolly hang. But the thing that dashed me was that just as I moved toward the door to close it, he uttered my name again and came straight toward me as though to speak.

So I had to wait, by Jove, for I couldn't close the door in his face. Awfully rotten thing to do—that, you know.

"Lost his floor and wants to inquire," I decided.

And then as he toddled across the last yard and stopped before me, I saw that the old chap was in his night things—some darkish sort of pajamas.

His bushy white eyebrows puckered in a frown.

"Hello! Just afraid my moving around was going to get you up—infernal shame!" he said in a thunder growl.

I smiled feebly but politely. "Devilish considerate old cock," was my thought. "Means well."

Aloud I said: "Not at all, you know. Up anyhow."

Then I moved the door just a little—

just a wee suggestive inch or two, you know, hoping he would go.

But, by Jove, he just walked right in!

Then he leaned against the wall in the corridor and chuckled.

"By George!" he exclaimed with a leer that showed his almost toothless old gums. "Bet you never would guess what I got up for!"

No, dash it, I didn't even care to try. I just coughed a little.

"He, he!" he giggled. "Woke up and remembered had promised Flossie Far-dango of the 'The Parisian Broilers' a box of steamer flowers. Gad, she sails at ten; so I piled out and shot off a note to my florist, special delivery. Been trying to find out from that infernal card back there when's the first collection from the box below. You don't know, do you?"

By Jove, one of those foot-in-the-grave old stage door Johnnies! The surprise took my breath.

"Why, the cheesy old sport!" I thought disgustedly. And I answered rather coldly: "Sorry, you know; no idea." And I opened the door wide.

But the old rascal never moved; just stood there, chuckling horribly.

"Well, she'll be back in the fall," he cackled. "And see here, old chap, will introduce you if you like. You need waking up!"

And here I gave a jump and yelled, "Ouch!"

For the old fool had dug his thumb into my ribs. Only then did it dawn on me that he was drunk.

Of course that was it, and unless I got rid of him the old bore would stand and twaddle the rest of the night.

I reached for his hand and shook it.

"We'll have a talk about it some time," I said pleasantly. "Just now, don't you think we'd better each get to bed? So devilish late, you know."

He slapped me on the shoulder with a blow that almost brought me to the floor. Felt like he struck me with a ham, don't you know!

"Right, old chap," he said; "very delicately put; won't keep you up another minute. Believe I'd like a drink first, though, if you don't mind."

Devilish bored as I was, I decided the easiest escape was to humor him.

"All right," I said, leaving the door open and stepping into the room; "I'll get you a glass of water."

"Water!" he exclaimed, following me right in. "Say, don't get funny; it's not becoming to you." He leered at me hideously.

He went right to the corner where stood my cellarette.

By Jove, give you my word I was so devilish stupefied I couldn't bring out a word. I wasn't sure what was coming, and as I didn't want Billings's rest disturbed, I quietly closed the door of his room.

The old cock in the black pajamas had uncorked a bottle and was smelling its contents. He grimaced over his shoulder.

"That's infernally rotten Scotch, I say!" he exclaimed with a sort of snort. "Regular sell, by George!"

I was glad Billings didn't hear him, for it had been a present from him only the week before.

"Suppose I'll have to go the rye," he grumbled; and, grinning at me familiarly, he poured himself a drink. He tossed it off, neat. I reflected that perhaps he would go quietly now.

"Well," I said, advancing, "I expect you're anxious to get to your quarters, so I'll say good night." I extended my hand. "That ought to fetch him," I thought, "if he's a gentleman, no matter how jolly corked he may be."

In my grasp his hand felt like a small boxing glove, but when I glanced at it I saw that it was not unusual.

The old duck pumped my arm solemnly and cast his eyes to the ceiling.

"Fa-are-we-e-ll, old f-friend!" he murmured in a husky tremolo, deflecting the corners of his mouth and wagging his bald pate. "If I don't see you again I'll have the river dragged!"

And then, instead of going, dash me if the old fool didn't flop down into Billings's favorite chair and reach for Billings's cigarettes that he had left on the tabouret.

He waved his hand at me. "Oh, you go on to bed, Lightnut," he said, puffing

away with iron nerve. "All the sleep's out of me, dammit! I'll just sit here and read and smoke as long as I like, then I'll go in there and turn in." A jerk of his doddering head indicated Billings's room.

By Jove, I hardly knew what to do! I was regularly bowled over, don't you know. I was up against a crisis—that's what—a crisis.

"Oh, I say, you know—" I started remonstrating, and just then I gasped with relief at the welcome sight of Jenkins, peeking round the door frame behind my visitor's back. His finger was on his lips and he beckoned me earnestly.

At the same moment old whiskers shoved his chair up to the table, switched on the reading lamp and reached for a magazine.

"I'm on, sir," whispered Jenkins as I joined him and we stepped aside. "Hadn't I better ring up the janitor on my house phone?"

"By Jove, the very thing!" I agreed. "For he'll know where this chap belongs. A fiver, tell him, if he gets a move on. Hurry!"

I slipped back into the room as Jenkins disappeared.

The jolly old barnacle had discarded his cigarette and was critically selecting a cigar from my humidor.

"I don't see why the devil you don't go to bed," he said, fixing himself comfortably with two chairs and lighting up.

"I—I'm not sleepy," I stammered, perching on the corner of a chair.

"I believe you're lying," he growled, scowling at me; "but if you're not sleepy, listen to this joke here—it's a chestnut, but it's infernally good."

I never did know what the joke was, for I was listening for other sounds as he read. Suddenly I heard a whistle far down in the street; and I thought it was followed by a patter of running feet.

Then came the quivering rhythm of the elevator rapidly ascending, and while the anecdote was still being droned out between chuckles, I slipped out again into the hall and rejoined Jenkins.

"Janitor says there's no such tenant

in this building as I described," Jenkins imparted hurriedly. "Might be a guest, of course; but he doesn't remember ever seeing him. So he whistled for a cop, to be on the safe side, and he caught two. Here they are, sir."

Out from the elevator sprang the janitor, half dressed and looking excited. Close on his heels came two big policemen.

I stepped into the outer corridor and explained the situation. The officers nodded reassuringly.

"Nough said," one of them commented. "We'll have him out, sir."

The janitor, who had been cautiously sighting through the door within, came running out.

"He shifted around while I was looking, and I got a good look at him," he said with some excitement, "and I never saw him before. I wouldn't forget *that mug!*"

"Suppose you take a squint at him yourself, O'Keefe," suggested the taller of the coppers. "You've been on this beat so long."

In a minute or two O'Keefe came slipping back hurriedly. He drew his companion aside.

"Tell you what, Tim," I heard him say, "do you know, I'm after thinking it looks like old Braxton, known in the perfesh as 'Foxy Grandpa.' He's a swell con man, but has just finished a stretch at Copper John's for going through a flat in the Bronx. He's done murder once."

The other turned to me.

"May save a muss in your rooms if you'll just kinder call him out, sir," he suggested. "It will be simpler." He grinned significantly and glanced at his night stick.

"By Jove!" I ejaculated, looking at Jenkins. "By Jove, you know!"

Jenkins coughed. "Just say you want to speak to him a minute, sir," he said. "They'll do the rest—h'm!"

They all followed me into the hall, and I stepped to the doorway.

And then I almost pitched forward, I was so devilish startled.

For, as a crowning example of his daring and reckless conduct, the hoary old

reprobate was emerging from Billings's room, his fingers overhauling the contents of my friend's wallet, even as he waddled along, and so absorbed that he never even saw me.

"Ah!" he breathed in a heavy sigh of satisfaction; and out came his fingers, and in them, poised aloft, he held the ruby I had given to Billings. His bleary eyes gloated at it.

"Mine!" he whispered. "Mine now to keep forever!"

XI

I just stood in the doorway, staring.

Couldn't say a word, my throat was that paralyzed. First time, you know, I'd ever seen a real burglar or jolly hold-up man, and he looked so different from what I had expected.

But I knew now, of course, that the policeman was right and that the respectable-looking old gentleman was no other than the desperate criminal described as "Foxy Grandpa." But for the intervention of outside assistance doubtless Billings and I might have had our throats cut by the conscienceless old geezer.

He was so absorbed that he did not see me, nor the two helmets piking above my shoulder.

"Up to his old tricks," O'Keefe whispered. "We've got him in the act, Tim!"

"Great!" breathed Tim. "What won't the Captain say!"

O'Keefe's breath tickled my ear again and swept my nose. I've never seen beer or sauerkraut since but what I think of it!

"Got your stick ready?" he was saying. "Best not take any chances; Braxton's a quick shooter, they say. When we jump him, better give him the club right off."

Tim whispered an impatient demur. "That's all right; but I'm for coaxing him out here first. I don't want to tap him on the gentleman's rugs; if I do, I can tell you, it'll ruin 'em, that's all."

He swept his hand across his tongue and gripped his stick tighter.

Jenkins, at one side, bobbed his head up and down and smiled his admiration of this sentiment. He leaned nearer to me.

"Just beckon him out, sir," his whisper advised. "Just tell him you want to show him something in the hall—cat, or anything will do. Just so you get him past the furniture and rugs, sir."

I advanced a step into the room.

I expected the old knave to be a bit dashed, don't you know. Not he; it never disquieted him a bit. Just gave me a careless leer and went back to the ruby.

Somehow I began to feel riled.

I'm not often taken that way, but this old scamp's persistent audacity and impudence went beyond anything I had ever heard of.

"What in thunder's the matter with you, son?" he murmured, squinting hideously at the jewel. "You prowl around like you had a pain." Then he went right on:

"Say, did you ever see anything so corking fine?" He looked up, holding the ruby in the light. "And to think how little I dreamed of scooping anything like that when I came in here tonight!"

By Jove, this was a little too much, even for an easy going chap like myself! The jolly worm will turn, you know.

Dash me, before I knew what I was doing even, I had moved to his side and jerked the ruby from his hand. My face felt like a hot water bottle as I did it.

"You haven't got it yet" I said, "and I'll take devilish good care you don't get it."

He fell back as though from a blow.

"Why—why, old chap! Why, Lightnut!" he gasped. "What's the matter—what makes you look at me like that?"

"Your liberties have gone just a bit too far, don't you know," I said, looking steadily in his fishy old eye. "I've had enough of you, by Jove, that's all!"

He stared at me, and I could hear him breathing like a blacksmith's bellows. I would never have thought he had such lungs.

Slowly his hand came out, and dash me if it wasn't shaking like he had the delirium what's-its-name. But for his tan, his face would have been as white as his hypocritical old whiskers.

"Is this some infernal joke?" His face summoned a sickly smile that almost instantly faded. His hand fell back to his side. "Why, old fellow, you don't think that way about me, do you? As for the ruby, I—I don't want it now—I just want you to accept my apology for anything I've done, and—and let me get away."

There was a short laugh from the doorway.

"Likely enough," said Officer O'Keefe, his big figure swinging forward with long strides. "Keep him covered, Tim!"

He planted himself between us with a grin.

"You're 'it' again, Foxy! Jig's up. Will you go quietly?"

It did me good to see how completely the old scoundrel was taken back. His wide distended bleary eyes shifted from O'Keefe to me and back again. It was a perfect surprise.

I motioned to Jenkins to close the door of my friend's bedroom. So far, he had evidently slept serenely through all the trouble, and, if possible, I wanted to avoid arousing him now. For a fat man, Billings had the deuce of a temper when stirred up over anything like an imposition upon him, and it would only add to the confusion for him to appear on the scene and learn about his wallet and his treasured ruby that I had rescued.

Foxy Grandpa's face had been rapidly undergoing a change. From pallor to pink it went; and then from pink to red. Now it was becoming scarlet. He threw his head back and faced me angrily.

"Lightnut, will you tell me what the hell this means?" And his heavy voice thundered.

"Here! Here! That'll be enough o' that," cried Officer O'Keefe sharply. "None of your grandstand play here, or it'll be the worse for you. And no tricks, Braxton, or—"

He clutched his stick menacingly.

"Braxton!" snorted the old fellow. "Why, you born fool, my name's not Braxton!"

* "Not now," grinned O'Keefe. "Say, what is your name now, Foxy?"

"My name—" roared Foxy Grandpa, and paused abruptly. He looked rather blankly from one officer to the other.

"See here; do I understand I'm under arrest?" he inquired.

"You certainly are talking, Foxy," chuckled O'Keefe.

"Then my name's Doe—John Doe," and I thought the fellow's quick glance at me held an appeal. Of what sort, I had no idea.

"And what, may I ask, is the charge?" he asked again, with what was apparently a great effort at calmness.

"Oh, come now, Braxton," said the officer in a tone of disgust, "stop your foolery; you're just using up time. Ain't it enough that you're in this building and in this gentleman's rooms?"

"In his rooms!" exploded Foxy Grandpa. "Why, you lunkhead, this gentleman will tell you I am his guest!" He turned to me with a sort of angry laugh.

"Tell him, Lightnut," he rasped. "I've had enough of this!"

The big policeman's features expanded in a grin, while Tim doubled forward an instant, his blue girth wabbling with internal appreciation of the Foxy one's facetiousness; and the janitor snickered.

Jenkins looked shocked.

As for me, dash it, I never so wished for my monocle, don't you know!

O'Keefe's head angled a little to give me the benefit of a surreptitious wink.

"Oh, certainly," he said, his voice affecting a fine sarcasm; "if the gentleman says you're his friend—"

"He's no friend of mine," I proclaimed indignantly. "Never saw him before in my life, you know."

Instead of being confounded, the artful old villain fell back with a great air of astonishment and dismay. By Jove, he managed to turn fairly purple.

"Wha-a-t's that?" he gasped strangely and clutching at the collar of his pajamas. "Say that again, Dicky."

I looked at him severely.

"Oh, I say, don't call me 'Dicky,' either," I remonstrated quietly. "It's a name I only like to hear my intimate friends use."

He kind of caught the back of a chair and glared wildly at me from under his bushy wintry eyebrows. The beefy rolls of his lower jaw actually trembled.

"Don't you — haven't you always classed me as that, Dic—er—Lightnut?" he sort of whispered.

By Jove, the effrontery of such acting fairly disgusted me. I looked him over from head to foot with measured contempt. "I don't know you at all," I said coldly, turning away.

"Ye gods!" he wheezed, clutching at his grizzled hair.

XII

THE two policemen shifted impatiently.

"That'll about do, Foxy," growled O'Keefe. "It's entertaining, but enough of a thing—"

But the old duffer caught his sleeve.

"Wait!" he panted. "One second—wait—just one second!"

He looked at Jenkins and ducked his neck forward, swallowing hard.

"Jenkins," he said with a sickly smile. "You—you see how it is with Lightnut—poor fellow! None of us ever thought he would go off that bad though. But, as it is, I guess you're the one now who will have to set me right with these people. You'll have to stand for me."

Jenkins looked alarmed. He addressed the officers eagerly:

"S'help me," he cried, his glance impaling the prisoner with scorn, "I never see this party before in the ten years I been in New York!"

Did that settle the fellow? By Jove, not a bit; his jolly nerve seemed inexhaustible!

He blinked a little; and then with a roar he jumped for Jenkins, but O'Keefe shoved him back. Panting and struggling between the two officers, and fairly at bay at last, the desperate old man seemed to determine one last bluff, don't you know, and with the janitor.

"Here, you," he bellowed, as the man dodged behind Jenkins. "You have seen me come in this building often! Tell 'em so, or I'll kill you!"

The little man turned pale, but came up pluckily.

"If—if I had," he stammered, "you never would have come in again, if I knew as much about you as I do now. I assure you, gents, I never laid eyes on this man before."

"Well, I'll be—"

He broke off and seemed to fall out of the grasp of the men backward into a big chair. Couldn't quit his jolly acting, it was clear to me, even when he had played his last card.

"Is everybody crazy, or am I?" he said, brushing his hand across his forehead; and dashed if the perspiration didn't stand on it in big drops, clear up into his old bald pate.

"See here," he broke out again, addressing O'Keefe, "send for somebody else in this building; send for—" He seemed to deliberate.

The policeman laughed derisively.

"Likely we'll be hauling people out of bed at this hour, isn't it," he sneered, "just to let you keep up this fool's game!" He leveled his stick menacingly. "Now, looky here, Braxton!" he exclaimed sternly. "I'm being easy with you because you're a gray-headed old man, but—"

By Jove, it was plain he had struck a sensitive point!

"Gray-headed old man!" shouted the fellow, coming out of the chair like a rubber ball, and pointing to his reflection in the long mirror. "Does that look like gray hair—that red topknot? It'll be gray, though, if this infernal craziness goes on much longer—I'll say that much!" And back he flopped into the chair.

The two officers exchanged glances, and, by Jove, they looked ugly!

"Call for the wagon, Tim," said O'Keefe shortly, indicating the phone. "The fool's going to give trouble. Kahoka Apartments, tell them. Hurry; let's get him to the street."

He made a dive at the figure in the chair and jerked him forward.

But his grip seemed to slip and he only moved his prisoner a few inches. He tried again with about the same result.

"Get a move on, Tim," he said pantingly. "He's bigger, somehow, than he looks, and awful heavy; it'll take both of us. Get up, Braxton, unless you want the club!"

The man settled solidly in the depths of the chair.

"Club and be hanged," he replied with a snap of the jaw. "I won't go in any dirty police wagon—that's flat! You may take me in a hearse first. Get a cab or a taxi, if I have to go with you!"

"Gamey old sport, anyhow, by Jove!" I thought with sudden admiration. Couldn't help it, dash it! Heart just went out to him, somehow.

I gently interposed as O'Keefe prepared to lunge again.

"I'll stand the cab for him, officer," I said with a smile, "if your rules, don't you know, or whatever it is, will allow."

I added in a lowered voice:

"Makes it devilish easier for you, don't you know, and avoids such a jolly row. And—er—I want to ask you and your friend to accept from me a little token of my appreciation."

The policeman exchanged a glance with Tim and considered.

"Well, sir," he said, "as to the cab, of course if you're a mind to want to do that, it's your own affair."

He turned to his companion.

"Just cancel that, Tim," he directed. "Call a four-wheeler."

"Thank you, Lightnut," put in the old man gratefully. "You *have* got a grain of decency left, by George, after all!"

Meantime, Jenkins was answering my inquiry.

"I don't believe, sir, you have a bit of cash in the house. You told me so when you were retiring."

By Jove, I remembered now! The poker game in the evening!

I was wondering whether they could use a cheque, when I spied Billings's wallet on the table.

The very thing, by Jove! Examination showed, first thing, a

wad of yellowbacks fresh from the bank. I peeled off two and pushed them into the officer's hand.

"This belongs to a friend of mine," I remarked; "but it's just the same as my own, don't you know, and he won't mind. Dash it, we're just like brothers!"

A howl of maniacal laughter from the old fool in the chair startled us both.

"Regular Damon and Pythias, damn it!" he gabbled, grinning with hideous face contortions. "One for all, and all for one! And just help yourself; don't mind me. Why—*hell!*"

O'Keefe prodded him sharply in the shoulder with his night stick.

"Stop your skylarking now, Foxy," he admonished angrily, "and come on. Here the gentleman's gone and put up his money for a cab for you and you ought to want to get out of his way so he can rest."

"He's sure been kind to you," supplemented Tim, whose eye had noted the passing of the yellow boys.

"Kind!" mocked the old geezer, showing his scattered teeth in a horrible grin. "Why, he's a lu-lu, a regular Samaritan!"

"No names!" warned O'Keefe, slightly lifting his night stick. "Come on to the street—you seem to forget you're under arrest."

He added hastily:

"And I ought to have warned you that anything you may say, Foxy—"

"Oh, you go to—Brooklyn!" snarled Foxy. "For two pins I'd knock your block off, you fat-headed Irish fool! Think I'm going down to the sidewalk without my clothes?"

"Are your clothes somewhere in this building?" I asked with some sympathy.

He whirled on me sneeringly and jeered like a jolly screech owl:

"Oh, no; not exactly *in* the building—they're on the flagpole on the roof, of course! He-he-he! Bloody good joke, isn't it?"

I sat on the edge of the table wearily; and, catching the policeman's eye, shrugged my shoulders significantly.

"You're right, sir," he said apologetically. "We won't fool a second longer.

Here, you take that side, Tim. Let's pull!"

They pulled, but, by Jove, they couldn't raise him.

"Queerest go I ever see," Tim gasped. "He ain't holding on to nothing, is he? And, O'Keefe, he *feels big!*"

"Pshaw, it's not that," the other panted; "it's just the way he's sitting. Why, you can *see* he ain't so very big." He nodded to Jenkins and the janitor. "Here, you two! Help us, can't you?"

And with one mighty, united heave, they brought the loudly protesting old man to his feet and held him there. O'Keefe faced me.

"Might be well to take a look around, sir, and see if you think of anything else he's stolen, before we take him off."

"Good idea, Lightnut!" Old Braxton stopped struggling and whirled his head toward me, his face almost black with rage. "Ha, ha! Why don't you have me searched? There's not a pocket in these damn pajamas!"

"Anything whatever, sir, we'll have him leave behind," said O'Keefe.

"By Jove!" I don't know how I ever managed to say it. Fact is, things had just suddenly spun round before me like a merry what's-its-name. For I *did* recognize something! The old fellow's unabashed reference to pajamas was what brought it to my attention.

"Ha!" O'Keefe nodded. "There *is* something! Just say the word, sir."

I looked helplessly at Jenkins, and then I saw that of a sudden he recognized them, too. His eyes rolled at me understandingly.

"What is it, sir?" demanded O'Keefe respectfully. "The law requires—"

I swallowed hard. "It—it's the pajamas," I said faintly.

The old rascal uttered a roar and tried to get at me.

"You cold-blooded scoundrel!" he bellowed. "So this is why—"

But here a jab of the night stick took him in the side with a sound like a blow upon a punching bag. Words left the old man and he seemed to be gasping desperately for breath. O'Keefe tried to shake him.

"Did you get those pajamas in here?" he demanded fiercely, and he drew back his stick as though for another jab. But the old geezer nodded quickly, glaring at me and trying to wheeze something.

"That's enough," said the officer. He turned to me. "You recognize them, do you, sir?"

"I—I think so," I stammered, looking at Jenkins, who nodded. "They belong to a friend of mine who—a—must have left them here."

"I see." He fished out a notebook. "Mind giving me the name, sir? Just a matter of form, you know—" He licked his pencil expectantly.

"Oh, I say, you know—" I gasped at Jenkins. "I don't think she—I—"

"Certainly not, sir," affirmed Jenkins, solemnly looking upward.

"She?" The notebook slowly closed, then with the pencil went back into the officer's pocket. "Excuse me, sir. H'm!"

"H'm!" echoed Tim apologetically. Then they both glared at Foxy.

The old man just snarled at them. He was like a dog at bay.

"All right!" he hissed. "You just try to take them off—I'll kill somebody, that's all. Think I'm going to make a spectacle of myself?"

Jenkins whispered to me.

"To be sure," I said aloud. "He might as well wear them now to the station. Just so he returns them when he gets his clothes."

"Very good, sir," said O'Keefe, relieved. "We'll see he does that. Come along now, Braxton—*shut up*, I tell you!"

And with all four of them behind the charge, they managed to rush the loudly protesting old man to the door.

"I won't go without my clothes, I tell you," he raged.

But he did. Fighting, swearing and protesting, the jolly old vagabond was roughly bundled into the elevator.

"Good night, sir," called O'Keefe as the four of them dropped downward. "We'll let you know if it seems necessary to trouble you."

Once again inside, Jenkins and I just stared at each other without a word, we were that tired and disgusted. To me,

the only dashed crumb of comfort in the whole business was the wonderful fact that Billings seemed to have slept like a jolly Rip through the whole beastly row.

Very softly I opened his door again, so that the breeze flowed through once more. Jenkins put out the lights, and I stood there listening, but could hear no sound within the room, for the street below was already heralding the clamor of the coming day.

Jenkins's whisper brushed my ear as I moved away:

"Sleeping like a little baby, ain't he, sir?"

XIII

By Jove, it seemed to me I had been asleep about a minute when I saw the sunlight splashing through the blinds.

Jenkins stood beside me with something in his hand.

"Didn't hear me, did you, sir?" he was asking. "I said I thought the address looked like Mr. Billings's handwriting. And he's gone, sir."

"Gone?"

I sat up, rubbing the sleep from my eyes. I had a befogged notion that Jenkins looked a little queer.

"Yes, sir. He's not in his room, nor in the apartment anywhere."

"Eh—how—what's that?" For Jenkins's hand extended an envelope.

"Perhaps you would like to read this now, sir," he suggested.

It was from Billings—I knew his fist in an instant. It was very short and without heading. In fact, above his name appeared just a half-dozen penciled words, heavily underscored, and without punctuation:

Damn you send me my clothes

"His clothes?" I looked perplexedly at Jenkins.

He was looking a little pale and held his eyes fixedly to the picture molding across the room. He coughed gently.

"Yes, sir," he uttered faintly; "they're in his room, but *he ain't*."

"By Jove!" I remarked helplessly. And just then I remembered some-

thing that brought me wide awake in an instant.

I questioned eagerly:

"I say—that desk lamp in there, Jenkins—did you switch it on in the night? And the doors I found open—know anything about them?" And Jenkins's blank expression was the reply.

"By Jove, Jenkins!" I gasped.

Jenkins compressed his lips. "Exactly, sir."

"Er—what were you thinking, Jenkins?" I questioned desperately. And I think Jenkins's stolidity wavered before my anxious face.

"It ain't for me to be thinking anything, sir—besides, the messenger's waiting—but—" His hand sought his pocket.

He stepped back, leaving something on the stand by my bed.

"What's that?" I questioned in alarm. "Another note?"

"No, sir—not exactly, sir. But if I may suggest—without offense, sir—that you fill it out, I will see that it gets to him."

"Him? Who's him—he, I mean?"

"Doctor Splasher, sir, the temperance party I was speaking of. I've already filled out mine, and I'm going to put one in for Mr. Billings when I send the clothes." From the doorway he turned a woe-begone countenance toward me. "It's heartrending, sir—if I may be permitted to say so—to think of a nice gentleman like Mr. Billings wandering over to the club with nothing on but red pajamas."

But when I telephoned, they stated that Billings had not been at the club since last evening. Someone who answered the phone thought Mr. Billings was with his friend, Mr. Lightnut, in the Kahoka Apartments. And, of course, I knew jolly well he was not.

As I turned from the telephone, something in Jenkins's expression arrested my attention.

"Well?" I said impatiently, for he has so many devilishly clever inspirations, you know; and, dash it, I like to encourage him.

"Pardon, sir, but don't you think—" Here he looked straight up at the elec-

trolier and coughed. "About Mr. Billings, sir; I was going to suggest that though he isn't over at the club, he's somewhere, sir."

Why, dash it, I thought *that* jolly likely myself! I said so.

"Yes, sir," said Jenkins darkly. "And Mr. Billings usually knows *where* he is. I guess, sir, he's in this neighborhood—hm!"

I just sat staring at him a minute, thinking what a devilish wonderful thing intuition is for the lower classes.

"By Jove, Jenkins!" I said; "then you think—"

"I think Mr. Billings, sir, might prefer to find himself—h'm! Yes, sir." Jenkins lifted the breakfast tray with deliberation, removed it from the room, and returned, moving about the furniture and busying himself with an air of mystery. Dash it, I knew he had up his sleeve some other devilish clever notion, and so presently I spoke up just to touch him off.

"By Jove!" I remarked.

"Yes, sir." Jenkins rested the end of the crumb brush on the table and considered me earnestly. "You know, Mr. Lightnut, last night as Mr. Billings was retiring, he says to me: 'Jenkins, Mr. Lightnut has promised to go up home with me tomorrow for the week end. There's a tenner coming your way if he doesn't forget about it. He's to go *tomorrow*, now, mind you, Jenkins; and it don't matter *what* comes up. You see that he goes up tomorrow.'"

"By Jove!" I said as he paused, and I screwed my monocle tighter and nodded. "I see."

Of course, I didn't see, but I knew the poor fellow was driving at something, and I wanted to give him a run.

"Exactly, sir." And he stood, waiting. "So, shall I pack, sir? You'll want to take the four ten express, I suppose?"

By Jove, it was the most amazingly, dashed clever guess I ever knew Jenkins to get off! Fact! I knew that if there was one thing more than another in all the world that I wanted to do, it was to take that four ten express.

To think of seeing Frances again, and today!

Of course, it was quite clear that Billings must have anticipated the possibility of something unusual, and that was why he had impressed a sort of personal responsibility upon Jenkins—kind of tipping him off, as it were, so he would be sure to see that I got off in case he did not show up himself. It was very easy to see this, especially as Jenkins saw it that way, too, but what made it specially so awfully jolly easy to see was the fact that I *wanted* to go, you know.

So I let Jenkins shoot a wire up to Billings, stating my train, and I just had to chuckle as in my mind's eye I saw old brazen face Jack coming down to the station to meet me, and just ignoring his going off in the middle of the night in my pajamas. By Jove, perhaps he would bring *her* down to the train in his car, so I would be sure not to ask him any questions!

I left Jenkins to travel by a later train, and a little after four I was whirling above Spuyten Duyvil and looking about the chair car to see if there was anyone I knew. But, by Jove, there was hardly a soul in the car—nobody except just women, you know, and these filled the whole place. And they were talking about all sorts of dashed silly things. Most of them were devilish pretty as the word goes, but of course not a patch on *her*. Oh, well, of course, they *couldn't* be that! Don't know how they were behind me, you know—too much trouble to turn round and fix my glass. So I just took the range in front, looking at the tops of the hats and the chairs and wondering if women would ever become extinct like that bird—the great what's-its-name, you know.

"By Jove, *she* could be spared!" I thought, studying a young woman who stood in the aisle beside me. She was rather heavy set—what you might call egg-shaped. Her face and her heavy glasses seemed to proclaim a mission in life, and the dowdyish cut of her rig and the reckless way it was hurled on made it plain that she was on to the fact that nature had made a blunder in her sex,

and she wanted the world to *know* she knew.

She was talking to the lady immediately behind me. At least, I discovered after five minutes that she was talking. By Jove, up to that time, I thought she was canvassing for a book! The other never got in a word. And I was getting devilish tired of it and wishing she would move on, when she shifted, preparatory to doing so, and raised her voice:

"Very well then, if you don't care to come, I think I will go forward again and finish the discussion with Doctor Jennie Newman upon the metamorphoses of the primordial protoplasms. Watch out for Tarrytown now, Frances."

Tarrytown! Frances! By Jove, my heart skipped a beat!

The other murmured something.

Her voice! Her blessed, sweet voice, of which every syllable, every shade, was indented in my memory like the record of a what's-its-name! By Jove, my Frances, and right behind me!

All I could do to sit still a minute longer, but I knew jolly well if I turned now I would be introduced to the freak and lose I couldn't tell how many precious moments with my dear one. So I sat low in the chair, polishing my monocle, you know, and noting with satisfaction that my part reflected all right in the little strip of mirror. I tried to get a glimpse of her in it, too, but all I could see was a glorious white hat—a stunning Neapolitan, flanked with a sheaf of wild ostrich plumes.

And then the freak left. I watched her sprawl down the aisle and out through the little corridor before I dared risk the accident of a backward turn of that funny green hat.

Then, when all was safe, I took a deep breath, gripped hard the arms of the chair, and whirled suddenly around.

"Frances!" I whispered. "My darling!"

XIV

"Oh!" she gasped faintly.

That was all she said at first, her big blue eyes wide distended, her white-gloved wrists curving above the chair

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arms as though to rise. Easy to see she was completely floored at seeing me.

And as it was her move, I just sat kind of grinning, you know, and holding her tight with my monocle.

Then her mouth twitched a bit; next her head went up and I heard again that delicious birdlike carol of a laugh.

Her eyes came to rest upon the hat in my hand. I had slipped my Harvard band around it, remembering the admiration she had expressed for our colors.

"Oh!" she said again, and she looked at me hesitatingly. "Mr. Jones, is it not—or is it—"

I chuckled. "Mr. Smith, you know," I said. "Mr. Smith, of course."

And then I just went on chuckling, for I thought it so devilish clever of her, so humorous. And just then I thought of a dashed good repartee:

"Months—so many months, you know, since we met!" And I thought it delightful the way she puckered her lovely little forehead and looked me over. But she just looked so devilish enticing, I couldn't keep it up myself. I leaned nearer and spoke behind my hat, trying to look the love I felt.

"Didn't expect to see me, did you?"

She looked at me oddly and bit her lip. But her eyes were dancing and the delicious dimple in her cheek twitched on the verge of laughter. She shook her head.

"Indeed I did not." And again came that odd look in her face as though she were studying, kind of balking, don't you know. By Jove, she was perfectly dazzling!

"My dearest!" slipped softly from me as I held the hat.

She stared. Then once more that canary peal of merriment.

"Oh, dear!" Then her face sobered and she almost pouted. "Now you mustn't—please, *really*—it gets so tiresome. Don't you American, or rather, you Harvard men, ever talk anything to a girl but love? Why, it's absurd." She smiled, but her lashes dropped re-proof. By Jove, I was taken back a little! Evidently she was piqued with me about something, but what the devil was it? And then I thought I had it.

I slipped nearer—to the edge of the chair.

"I didn't know you were in town to-day—'pon honor, I didn't. Billings never said a word about it," I explained. "Why, dash it, I would have given *anything* to have known."

She looked at me with a queer little smile, stroked her little lip with the point of one gloved finger and looked across the river at the Palisades. Dash the Palisades! Never could see any sense in them, anyhow.

"Oh, thank you, but Elizabeth and I didn't know ourselves until last evening that we would make the New York trip. She wanted to hear a suffragette lecture at the Carnegie and I had some shopping to do."

And she just gave me one of those calm, self-contained, thoroughbred sort of smiles that are harder to get past than a six-foot hedge. What the deuce *was* the matter with the girl?

Something had changed her; yet I knew that nothing could really change her at heart—never.

But it was certain that she was put out about something. I would just have to play her easy and try to find out what it was. I remembered hearing Pugsley say—and he has had no end of experience with them—that when women are put out they expect you to find out what it is, no matter how devilishly improbable or unreasonable it may be.

And just then I remembered another clever idea of Pugsley's—what he said was a corking good way of diverting their minds.

"I say, you know," I said suddenly—and though I threw a whole lot of enthusiasm into my face in carrying out his idea, I didn't have to try very hard—"I think that's a ripping gown. White is ever so much more your style than—than—"

By Jove, I swallowed just in time!

But it had roused her. I could see her brighten.

"Oh!" she said. "Let me see—what is it you remember?" And she kind of muttered, "Perhaps I can tell from that—"

She paused expectantly.

"Oh, I say, you know!" And I twirled the hat, feeling a bit rattled. Why the deuce did she want to rub it in?

"But I want you to tell me." Her beautiful eyes were teasing.

"*You know—in black.*" I twirled the hat faster.

"*Black!*" She stared, her exquisite lips standing apart like the two petals of a rose. "Why, I never wore black in my life. You *know* you never saw me in black."

I felt hurt. I couldn't blame her for wanting to appear to forget about it, but still—

She must have seen my face fall, for I know, by Jove, I could just feel it kind of collapse, I was that hurt and disappointed.

Her face softened kindly and I took courage, for my devilishly alert mind just then hit upon another explanation.

I recalled that she had thoughtlessly left the pajamas in my rooms. I also realized with dismay that Foxy Grandpa had promised, or rather the officers had promised for him, that they should be returned promptly. And by Jove, I had forgotten all about them!

"Never mind," I said, thinking aloud, as I frequently do, "I'll telephone about them as soon as we get to Wolhurst." Then a terrible thought struck me. "Oh, I say, you didn't have your name on them, did you?"

"On what?" How kindly, even if quizzically, she was regarding me! The big white hat shifted an inch or two nearer. I realized with joy that she was beginning to forget about being put out with me.

"Why—" I looked about cautiously and dropped my voice, though it was not likely anyone could hear above the quiver of the train. "Why, in your black pajamas you left in my rooms."

A kind of little gasp was all I heard, and then she was on her feet and looking—not at me, but above my head—looking away off down the length of the car. Somehow—why, I couldn't understand—I had a weird, horrible feeling of abasement, as though I had killed a child or had done some other dashed unreasonable thing like that. Her face had

flushed but now was deadly white. And then, by Jove, I saw she was looking for another chair.

I jumped up at once and moved into the aisle.

"I'm so sorry," I said miserably, "so sorry, dear, I hurt you. Indeed, I didn't mean ever to speak of the pajamas. I knew you wanted to forget about the other night, and I knew you wanted *me* to forget, too—"

"Oh, please—" She shrank back, her beautiful eyes like those of a frightened deer. But it was the last car, and I blocked the aisle. I didn't realize at the time that I was doing it. It came to me afterward, and was one of the things I kicked myself about for hours, more or less. Just at the moment I was so dashed wild about setting myself right with her. The only other thing I had presence of mind to remember was the nearness about us of a lot of beady-eyed cats, and so I drew nearer and lowered my voice so none could hear. For I had another feeling of inspiration as to what really was the matter with her!

Matter! I should say, rather! She was beginning to look angry—splendidly angry—her eyes just blazing blue fire. I knew I would have to get in my explanation quickly, and what's more, if what Pugsley thought was true, I would have to hit the jolly nail on the head or else everything was off, you know.

"Why, Frances—sweetheart," I pleaded softly—just loud enough for her to hear above the train, "I know you are put out with me because you found me gone the next morning, but honestly, dear, I acted for the best—indeed, I did." And to be on the safe side, I profited by another inspiration: "And, my darling girl, I'll never mention the pajamas and the other night—never any more—as long as we live, nor the cigarettes nor cigars nor whiskey. Why, I don't care if you—"

"Tarrytown—all out for Tarrytown!" came in a high tenor voice from the end of the car, and something bowled down the aisle and brushed me aside. It was the frump.

"Come on, Frances!" she exclaimed sharply; "our station." Next instant

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they were streaking it for the door, with me a good second. I saw Frances look behind once with—oh, such a look! Dashed if it didn't shrivel me, you know—that sort. And, by Jove, I knew Pugsley was right, and that I had failed to put the ball over!

I was not six feet behind as they scrambled through the station to the other side where a large car stood panting. I saw Frances clutch the frump's arm and whisper something and I heard the frump's reply, for her voice was loud and strongly masculine.

"Crazy?" she rasped. "Nonsense! Drunk, more likely. Most of them are half the time."

I didn't have time to see what she referred to, for just then we reached the side of the car. I didn't see a thing of Billings, but the chauffeur jumped to the ground and received the ladies and their bags. He seemed to me devilish familiar, too. By Jove, the way he held my darling's hand was the most infernally audacious, outrageous thing I ever beheld! I should have liked to punch his head. He helped them into the tonneau and was so busy with his silly jackass chatter that he closed the door before he turned and saw me. I was just standing there, leaning a little forward with my cane, you know, and fixing my monocle reproachfully on Frances—trying to get her eye.

And then, by Jove, I felt a blow on my shoulder that almost bowled me over, for I had my legs crossed, you know.

"Well, I'll be hanged—it's Dicky!" And he was grinning at me like a what's-its-name cat. And with the grin I recognized him. It was the fresh young fool who had been so devilish familiar at the pier the morning Frances left.

Then he banged me again, dash it, and tried to get my hand, but I put it behind me. But he did get my arm, and he turned toward the car. His voice dropped.

"See here, I want you to meet—Eh?" He broke off, staring at the frump, who was making signs with her eyes, frowning and beckoning him with her green flower pot. He left me, murmuring

something, and stepped to the running board. I could see the flower pot bobbing about energetically and twice Frances nodded, it seemed to me reluctantly.

"Crazy—drunk? Pshaw, you're batty!" he said to the frump rudely. Then I heard another murmur and his harsh voice rose again: "Yes—Lightnut, I tell you—Dicky Lightnut. Yes—Jack Billings's great friend. You just wait till he's back from the city, and if he don't get up on his hind— Eh, what? His name is *Smith?* Rats!"

All this time I was just standing there, trying to catch Frances's eye. I felt sure if I could catch her eye she would see how devilish sorry I was. I moved back a few feet, for, dash it, without a sign from her, I had no idea now, of course, of considering myself as one of the party. Not finding Billings with the car, and the information I caught that he was still in the city, just left me high and dry, you know.

"All right, Miss Smarty," the yellow-topped chauffeur rasped, addressing the frump, "I'll just show you!"

He turned about and jerked his head.

"Oh, Dicky! Here, just a minute, old chap—will you?"

Of course I took no notice of him whatever.

"Lightnut!" he called. I just stared up at the castle on the hill. I felt devilish annoyed, though. I recalled a conversation the other day at the club in which Van Dyne remarked that the intimacy affected now by chauffeurs was growing insufferable. Declared his man had asked him for a light that morning.

The fellow stared a little; then he came toward me, smirking in a jocular, impudent way.

"Say, stop your kidding, old man," he muttered; "girls have no sense of humor, you know. Come along—I've just been telling them you are my best friend."

I stole another look at the car, but Frances avoided me; so I came to a decision. I turned shortly on the driver.

"See here now, my good fellow," I said sharply, "you stop subjecting

those ladies to annoyance. Drive on, or I'll report you to my friends."

He stared—seemed to be trying to stare me out of countenance, in fact. Then the grin slowly faded.

"Why, Dicky!" he exclaimed in an aggrieved tone, "don't you remember me—don't you know me?"

"I certainly do not," I answered with decision. I felt my face getting red with vexation. "And what's more, my name is not 'Dicky.'"

His hand slowly swept his chin and he whistled.

"Wha— Well, I'll be—jiggeder!" He whirled toward the car.

"On me, this time, I guess! You're right!"

Then his face clouded and he moved down upon me.

"Here, you get along now about your business, whoever you are!" His hand waved as though sweeping me away. "I've a mind to kick you for annoying that young lady."

He looked toward Frances and I could see he was showing off. But I thought she looked a bit disgusted. As for the frump, she suddenly opened the door, stepped down and then up again, but this time behind the steering wheel.

"If you don't come on, I'm going," she said quietly.

"Just a minute," he said, scowling back at her. He faced me.

"Look here, if I hit you once"—he leveled his finger—"well, they'll have to pick you up with a spoon, that's all!"

But, except for fixing my glass for a better study of Frances, I never moved. Didn't occur to me as necessary, you know, until she should drive off. Just stood leaning on my cane and with feet crossed, you know, in the way I had long ago found was the least exhausting, if one has to stand at all. But, by Jove, the fellow was right in my face now almost! Devilish annoying!

"Did you hear me, you glass-eyed fool?" he barked in my ear. "You masher! By George, I'll mash you!"

And he looked at Frances again and laughed, but she was looking away off up at the big stone castle on the Pocantico Hills behind. And I just reveled in

her glorious profile, splashed bright by the golden sunshine reflected from the Tappan Zee opposite. Incidentally, I was trying in my mind the three arm movements that must be made as one, and for which, to learn, I had paid the great master Galliard of Paris a thousand francs in gold.

The car began to edge away.

"All right—coming!" he yelled; and then he launched his blow. But so rapid—instantaneous, in fact—are the famous three movements of the great scientist, I don't remember that my eye even shifted its grip upon the monocle. Therefore, as I came back into the same position again as his shoulder hit the ground, I was in time to catch my darling's eye at last just as they curved. And, by Jove, she looked amused—and pleased.

As for the frump, she frankly and harshly laughed, and then moved up a speed, just as a south-bound express took the station.

And I swung aboard it, back for little old New York. Didn't see what the chauffeur did. Wasn't interested, you know, about that.

XV

"Most infernal outrage of the century, I tell you!" Billings stormed. For an hour I had sat there in my rooms, limp and bewildered under the tempest of his wrath. The wild and incoherent sputter over the phone that Jenkins reported upon my return had sent me on a hunt for my friend. I had found him sullenly dining alone over at the club, and as soon as I entered he started to bolt from the room. Only through the greatest pleading had I managed to coax him back to my chambers, hoping I might screw out of him some explanation.

I had received it, by Jove!

Of course, I recognized it all as impossible and crazy, you know, but when I said so to Billings his remarks were so violent, and he turned such a dangerous apoplectic purple, dashed if I didn't renege.

"But then the old man, you know!" I protested weakly.

Billings leveled his big arm at me, mouthing wordlessly for a minute.

"That—that'll do about that, old man!" he choked at last. "Not—not another word about *him!*" And finally he collapsed into his seat from sheer exhaustion. Just sat there panting and glaring at me like a jolly bulldog.

Gradually he became calmer.

"Tell you what: the only thing that lets you out, Dicky, is the way Van Dyne and Blakesley did, in turn, when I got them there."

He spoke savagely, but I brightened a little.

"Oh!" I said. "Didn't they recognize you, either?"

Billings's snort made me jump.

"Recognize!" he bellowed. "They went back, mad as hell!"

"By Jove!" I said soothingly.

"That's not all," continued Billings grimly. "I was so sure it was a put-up job, some asinine, fool joke, I wrote a cautious note to the governor. After a lot of pleading, I got the fools to send it. He came."

Billings paused dramatically.

"Oh, yes, *he* came!" he went on, fixing me with an excited eye. "And when I staggered forward and did the prodigal son act on his neck, he handed me a punch that jolted off his silk tie. Went straight up in the air with the whole bunch down there and contracted to do things for them that will keep him active for a year. Threatened to have *me* sent up for forgery—this is my own father now, mind you—forger of my own name! Huh!"

Billings strode to the end of the room and back. Then he sat down again, beating with his foot upon the floor.

"Say, has everybody gone crazy?" he demanded.

I didn't dare say a word, for I had my own opinions, you know, and I knew it wouldn't do to express them. Only excite him. Best way seemed just to pretend to swallow it all, you know. Best way always, Pugsley says, especially with best friends.

"They were pretty nasty after that,"

Billings went on gloomily; "and they wouldn't send for anyone else. Just had to sit there in that infernal bastile with nothing on but pajamas and a pair of bedroom slippers. Every once in a while somebody would come and address me as 'Foxy,' and want me to send for my clothes or else send out and buy some. Finally, a big brute came and threw me some dirty rags and said I'd have to put on those or else buy some others. Buy some, Dicky—did you get that?—buy some!"

"Devilish rude, I say," I commented indignantly. "Who wants to wear *bought* clothes? Why, dash it, my tailor says—"

"Pshaw!" Billings whirled his fat head impatiently. "You miss the whole point, Dicky! I didn't have a cent of *money*; and what's more, I couldn't get any." He paused. "See? Try to get that, Dicky—make an effort, old chap."

I did, but, dash it, it was such a rum idea—very oddest thing he had said—and silly, you know. Fancy anyone not being able to send out and get money! I just got to thinking what a jolly queer idea it was and lost part of what Billings was saying—something about how he managed to get them to send a note for his clothes. Here is what I *did* hear:

"And I had just got into the togs and stuffed the rubies and pajamas out of sight in my pocket, when the particular brigand who had charge of my coop came back. He almost threw a fit when he saw me. 'Where's Twenty-seven?' he wanted to know. And then, before I could say a word, he blustered up to me with: 'And say, what business *you* got in here? Clear out!' And you bet I didn't lose a single golden minute—I cleared. You should have seen me beat it down that corridor! The fellow followed me a little, grumbling to himself. Then he called to a cop who was just coming in: 'Say, O'Keefe, run that young fat freak out of here, will you? It's one of that bunch of visitors that went through just now. Fresh thing—snooping into the cells!'

"And so the same cop that brought me there—the very same—was the one that shoved me out of the door, warning

me that I'd best not go poking into the prisoners' cells again if I knew what was good for me!"

"By Jove!" I ventured sympathetically.

Billings nodded. "Of course, I knew it was a semi-lucid interval with them all, but for all I knew it might pass any instant and some bat discover I was a Dutch scrubwoman escaped from Hoboken. So I broke for the first taxi and hit it up for the club."

Billings took a deep breath and went on:

"By George," he said, laughing nervously. "I felt like a dog with a can to its tail hunting for a place to hide. Every time a fellow looked at me I had heart failure until he called my by my own name. Bribed Eugene to lie about my whereabouts until his face hurt and then I went to bed. Sneaked out of my hole this evening to get a bite of something, and then you ran me down."

"And Dicky"—Billings finished excitedly—"I was sure you had come to drag me back to my dungeon, and I looked behind you, fully expecting to see those two Irish pirates. If I had, I should have swooned in my soup, that's all!"

I murmured my sympathy. And, by Jove, I certainly did have a heartache about him, but of course I couldn't tell him why. I was getting him quieted—I could see that—and he was so far mollified as to help himself to a cigar. When he had clipped a V from the end with his knife, he leaned over and tapped me impressively on the knee with the blade.

"And just think, Dicky," he said, absentmindedly emphasizing with the sharp point of the knife, "there I sat, moneyless—not even a dime, you know—in a suit of pajamas whose three buttons were worth one hundred and fifty thousand dollars!"

He fell back, his fat arms eloquently outspreading.

"Can you beat it?" he demanded.

I rubbed my palm on my knee and considered.

Privately, I thought I could beat it—by Jove, I was sure I could! I knew of a pair of pajamas worth a dashed sight

more than money. And I wondered gloomily where they were. I had telephoned as soon as I stepped out at the Grand Central Station, and after a bit made them understand who I was and reminded them that the black pajamas had not been returned according to promise. And then they told me Foxy Grandpa had escaped, but as he had nothing else on, they felt sure of rounding him up as soon as he came out of his hiding place—probably after dark.

"By the way, old chap," puffed Billings, his poise and good humor improving under the spell of the cigar, "I was sorry to return the pajamas torn and dusty and wrinkled as they were. But you see, on account of the rubies, I was leary about having them pressed or fussed over. So I wrapped and sealed them myself, just as one does a jewel package. Got them, did you?"

I stared at Billings through my glass.

"Didn't you get them?" he questioned in alarm.

"Yes, yes—it's all right, old chap," I said hastily and as pleasantly as I could. "Eugene delivered the box to Jenkins and I opened it myself. Thought it was—h'm—thought it was something else." Then I proceeded soothingly: "But you're just a little mistaken about the dust and wrinkles, old chap—and about them being torn. Ha, ha! Good joke!"

But Billings's face was unresponsive.

"Why, you goop," he said with cheerful contempt, "there's a triangular tear in the back of the coat you could stick your head through; and one of the sleeves is in ribbons."

I just opened the drawer of the table and took out the box—glove box, I think it was—containing the pajamas. I had read something somewhere about the clearing effect—the reaction, and that sort of thing, produced sometimes by a shock.

"See for yourself, old chap," I said gently. And I lifted out the gossamer fabrics and again spread their crimson glory under the lamp. Billings examined them eagerly, but just looked confounded.

"Don't understand it," he said, bit-

ing his nails. "Why, hang it, they look smooth, too, as though never worn. And the rubies are all right, too."

He rested his chin upon his hands and gloomed at the red sweep.

I caught a few sentences of his mumbling.

"By George, I'm half a mind to think there's something in the pajamas," he muttered—"something uncanny and disagreeable—something they're alive with!"

I sprang up and back, overturning my chair.

"Good heavens—oh, I say!" I exclaimed in consternation, as I fixed my glass on the garments. "It's your jail, then, you know—"

His hand checked my reach to the bell push.

"Don't be any more kinds of an ass than you can't help, Dicky," he said with rude irritability. "I'm talking about something else; and I haven't got any jail, dammit! A station house isn't exactly a jail!"

He reached for another cigar and went off into a brown study, wrapping himself in clouds of smoke. I thought that maybe if I kept quite still he might come to himself all right. Meantime, for want of something to do, and to keep from getting so devilish sleepy, I fell to turning over the pajamas, admiring their beauty and daintiness and kind of half-daringly wondering how *she* would—

And suddenly I made a discovery; and I forgot about keeping still.

"By Jove, Billings!" I exclaimed excitedly. "Here's something inside the collar—some sort of jolly writing!"

"What's that?" said Billings sharply. He jerked the garment from my hand and held it in the light. All round the circle within the collar band ran four or five darker red lines of queer little criss-cross characters.

"Chinese laundry marks, you idiot," he commented carelessly. And then he ducked his head closer with a quick intake of breath.

"By George, Dicky!" he cried, his voice tremulous with some excitement. "Can't be that either; it's woven in—

awfully fine, neat job, too. Now, what do you suppose—"

He broke off wonderingly.

XVI

BILLINGS rubbed his chin perplexedly.

"By jigger, now, I wonder what those hen tracks mean?" he uttered musingly. Then he looked up at me with sudden animation in his face.

"Look here, Dicky," he exclaimed, "do you happen to know Doozenberry?"

I tried to remember. I shut one eye and studied the marks closely through my glass, but had to shake my head at last.

"Sorry, old chap; don't seem to remember it at all if I ever did—not a dashed glimmer of it left." I yawned. "Never tried to keep any of those college things, you know."

Billings, who had been staring, uttered a rude comment.

"It's not a language, you cuckoo," he snapped; "it's a man. He's a D.S.—distinguished scientist, you know. What's more, he's one of your neighbors, right in this building."

"Don't know him," I said a little stiffly. "What's his club?"

Billings all but gnashed his teeth.

"Club, thunder!" he jerked out impatiently. "Why, man, he's a member of all the great societies of the world—bodies whose rank and exclusiveness put the blink on all the clubs you or I ever saw. Got a string of letters after his name like a universal keyboard, and is the main squeeze, the great scream, among all the scientific push over here and in Europe. Lots of dough, but off his trolley with learning."

"And in this building?" I said wonderingly. "What's he like?"

For a moment I had a thought of Foxy Grandpa, but the janitor had said he did not belong in the building. Besides, Billings's next words removed that clue to the lost pajamas. By Jove, how I did long to ask his advice about them! Once I was on the point of doing so—had devilish narrow escape, in fact—but pulled

up on the brink. So deuced hard to remember that anything so delicate and sweet and fetching could be Billings's sister, you know. I had been wondering for an hour whether I had better say anything about my adventure up at Tarrytown—wondered if she would like me to.

"Here, you moon calf, wake up!" Billings's coarse voice brought me back to the present, and I had to blink and pretend I was listening. "I'm telling you about Doozenberry! I say you surely must have seen him—you couldn't miss him in a black cave. Queer-looking old skate, tall as a street lamp and as thin; looks like a long cylinder of black broadcloth. So dignified it hurts him."

I reflected.

"Awfully large head," continued Billings, elevating his hands some two feet apart, "pear-shaped affair—big end up—bumps on it like halves of grape fruit, porcupine eyebrows, and—"

"Oh, I know," I said, nodding eagerly; "and a little, shriveled—well, kind of mashed sort of face, eyes beadlike and jolly small. I've got him now! I've gone down with him in the elevator."

Billings nodded. "You've got him painted," he said drily. "That's the Professor; only, his eyes are anything but 'jolly.' I've ridden in the elevator with him myself. Always manages to look like he was traveling with a bad smell!"

"Devilish sensitive, I dare say," I remarked thoughtfully.

Billings looked at me suspiciously, but I had got hold of the thing I was trying to recollect and I went on quickly:

"By Jove, you know, I believe Jenkins knows his man—fellow who butlers, and, I believe, cooks, for him. He and Jenkins belong to the same—how do they call it?—same club of gentlemen's gentlemen."

Billings brought his fist down. "Let's have Jenkins in," he suggested. And we did.

"I say, Jenkins," I began, "this Professor Doodlebug above us—"

"Doozenberry!" Billings sharply corrected.

"Well, some jolly rum thing about him, don't you know, Jenkins—something you said his man told you—remember, eh?"

Jenkins's eyes batted a little.

He cleared his throat. "Why, yes, sir; he told me a lot of funny things one night, sir. Don't suppose he would have done it, only him and me had an evening off and we—we—"

Jenkins seemed to hesitate.

"And you went on a bat together," suggested Billings, rubbing his hands pleasantly.

"It was, sir," Jenkins admitted, looking at me sadly. "Leastways, he sort o' loosened up as he got—got—"

"Pickled," Billings helped smoothly.

"Quite so, sir; there's some is that way always; some is taken other ways." Jenkins considered Billings moodily "The power of the demon rum, sir."

"Ah, true!" sighed Billings, lifting his eyes.

"This here chap, he got to going on and all but crying about his cursed hard fate—they'm his own words, sir—his cursed hard fate in having to drink water all the time and eat cow feed—"

"Eat what?"

"I don't know, sir—that's what he called it—something the Perfesser has him fix out of cereals and nuts and sour milk. That's all they have, sir; and they don't have no cooking, for the Perfesser says it breaks the celluloid—"

"Cellular," corrected Billings.

"Maybe so, sir," demurred Jenkins. "He *said* celluloid—the celluloid tissue papers, *he* called it. And then his having no heat on all winter and the windows kept open all the time and the snow piling up on his bed at night kept him with colds all the year. And then, there was the dampness—"

"That's it, the dampness!" I exclaimed. "Tell him."

"Why, sir, he told me that every night he had to turn down the Perfesser's bed and go all over it with a two-gallon watering can—"

"Watering can!" gasped Billings.

"I'm telling you what he says, sir. Then he covers it all up again, and in about a half-hour the Perfesser turns

the covers down; and if it's what he calls 'fine'—that is, damp all over—he climbs in and sleeps like a top."

"Cold-water bug, you know," I explained, but Billings shrugged his shoulders.

"That's all right. Bug or not, he's the goods, all the same. Greatest ever." He spoke with quiet conviction.

He deliberated a moment and turned to me.

"Tell you what, Dicky: I'm going up and ask him down. He's the one to give us the right dope on these crazy letters—Eh, what you say, Jenkins?"

"Beg pardon, sir; I was saying that the Perfesser don't visit nobody; and he never sees nobody but the big lit'ry and scientific sharps."

"Oh, he don't, eh?" Billings snorted contemptuously. "Well, Jenkins, I haven't been a prize fisherman in my time for nothing; I guess I know how to select my 'fly.' I know what will fetch him: 'Mr. Lightnut's compliments, and will he be pleased to honor him by passing upon an Oriental curio of rare scientific interest?'—that sort of merry rot! Why, you couldn't hold him back with a block and tackle. Oh, you needn't worry; I'll do the proper curves all right." He turned toward the door. "And, Jenkins, you come along and work me into the lodge."

"Oh, but dash it," I protested nervously, "he won't come—he'll be insulted. Why, he'll know as soon as he sees you that you couldn't—"

I checked myself, recalling that the best thing after his recent exhibition was to avoid every contradiction. And then, by Jove, I knew that if he became ill and had to go to a hospital or somewhere, it would be all off with his taking me up to Wolhurst next day.

Billings grinned confidently. "Watch me bring him down here," he said.

And by Jove, he did!

XVII

BILLINGS ushered in the Professor with a flourishing introduction.

The great man never spoke, but gave me the end of one finger, and devilish

grudgingly at that. He just came to anchor and stood there very straight and stiff, ignoring the chairs thrust toward him from every point. One hand was stuck in his stiff broadcloth bosom, with elbow pointing outward, and his great topheavy head reared above us impressively.

Billings rubbed his hands and bowed and smirked.

"Lovely weather we are having for summer, don't you think, Professor? Jenkins, a chair for the Professor."

He was already hedged in by chairs, but he remained standing. Dash it, he was staring hard at me, his beady eyes boring like gimlets, don't you know, and his little shriveled face all puckered up. By Jove, but he looked sour! Looked like he would bite, or, as Billings said afterward, would like to, if the human race wasn't poisonous.

"Wonderful stunt, science, isn't it, Professor?" gushed Billings, still rubbing his hands and grinning like a wild what's-its-name. "Tracing the orbits of the shooting stars or measuring the animals in the tiny sewer drop. H'm! Fascinating pursuit! And how marvelous it must be to be able to classify instantly any specimen of man's or nature's handiwork—to—a—call the turn, so to speak—right off the bat, as it were. H'm! We have here tonight—er—"

With his hand upon the pajamas, Billings paused, for the Professor paid no attention—did not even turn round, in fact. He just stood there staring at me.

Billings coughed suggestively.

"H'm! As I was saying, we have with us tonight a specimen," he resumed a little louder, "I may say an example of something that, while apparently commonplace and prosaic, is really a rare and unique—"

"Ha—specimen *genus cypripedium*," came in a squeaky bark from the Professor as he held me in his eye. "Linnaeus, 1753. Ha! *Species acaule*—proper habitat, bogs. Very common—very common, indeed."

He batted at me sourly and seemed disappointed.

By Jove, I never felt so devilish mortified in all my life! Never! I nearly dropped my monocle and felt myself getting jolly red about the ears. This only seemed to make it worse.

"Ha—*labellum* somewhat pinker purple than normal," he proceeded. "H'm! Unusually fresh specimen."

I looked appealingly at Billings. "Oh, I say, you know!" I exclaimed in dismay.

Billings had been standing with his mouth agape, but now he made a stride forward and touched the Professor on the arm.

"That's Mr. Lightnut, Professor," he said blandly. "That's not *the* specimen. H'm! Slight mistake."

Slowly the Professor's big head turned on its axis and his little eyes blinked at Billings nastily.

"I was referring to the orchid in the gentleman's coat," he observed quietly, and turned back to me.

"Of course! Of course!" stammered Billings with eagerness. "My mistake—one on me. *Stung!*" his lips pantomimed to me.

I addressed the Professor hospitably: "Ah! won't you sit down, Professor?"

He drew back, frowning. "Sit down, sir?" he questioned. And, by Jove, by this time he showed his teeth. And devilish white, even teeth they were, too, only they didn't fit.

"I never sit down, sir," he said stiffly; "never!"

"By Jove!" I exclaimed.

"To be sure!" ejaculated Billings, looking silly.

The Professor appeared not ungratified with the sensation he had produced and condescended to smile; that is, if you can call a creasing and wrinkling like the cracked end of a hard-boiled egg a smile.

"You say, 'sit down,' sir," he said, addressing me. "I ask you, in turn: Is not 'sitting down' recrudescence back to the primordial?"

So saying, he took a pinch at my shirt front and stepped back again impressively. Still addressing me, he continued:

"It is such thoughtless indulgence of

muscles growing obsolescent that retards the evolution of our species, a species, sir, which I claim is coessential in fundamental attributes with contemporaneous amphibia. Ha! I surprise you, perhaps? Can you note in me a resemblance to a batrachian?"

I didn't know. And, dash it, I was afraid to chance it. Tried my jolly best to think what a batrachian was. It came to me like a flash that it sounded like something in Italy.

"By Jove, you do, though, awfully!" I exclaimed, trying to brighten up over it. "Doesn't he, Billings? Noticed a resemblance right off, don't you know?"

Billings went to nodding with an air of pleased surprise. Dash me if I believed he knew what a batrachian was, though, any more than I did. But Billings never admits anything.

"Sure," he said glibly. "I was half suspecting it; why, look at the skin, you know—and features!"

"By Jove, yes!" I said, feeling encouraged. "Head, mouth, nose, eyes and—" I was going to say "hair," but I remembered in time about the wig.

The Professor looked awfully pleased. He gave me a finger again.

"Such perspicacity—ah—is rare in one who looks so—"

He coughed slightly, then resumed:

"How gratifying, indeed, to meet another investigator! A student in zoötomy, no doubt? Ah! Do not deny it; I divined it at once. A delightful recreation, sir—a game, absorbing but elusive."

"Awfully jolly, you know," I agreed. "Ripping, I say!"

"Surest thing you know," chirped Billings. I wondered if it was anything like polo.

And then, by Jove, thinking of polo sent me off again thinking of Frances. Not that she was like polo, dash it, but I wished she could see me play.

The Professor took another pinch from my shirt front and favored me with a rusty smile.

"Ah!" he said. "You must take time to look into a little monograph of

mine: 'Man in Miniature; a Study of the Anthropology of the Frog.' You regard the frog, of course?"

"Oh, I say, yes—fine, you know!" I answered, my mouth watering. By Jove! I thought of the devilish good things they got up in season down at the Café Grenouille.

"My dear sir!" The Professor bowed to me. "I cannot express to you how gratifying to me this meeting is. I must get a list of your societies and degrees. So few appreciate the frog; so many, even in the scientific world, deride my published claim that congenious with man is the *rana muciens* or American bullfrog."

They were certainly congenial with me, by Jove!

"Awfully hard to swallow unless well done, don't you know," I demurred thoughtfully.

"Truly incredible, sir!"

The Professor took another pinch and held it in front of him.

"But I have allowed for that," he added, emphasizing with his other hand. "My frog brochure meets that difficulty and whets the appetite of the most mediocre."

"By Jove, Billings!" I exclaimed eagerly, "we must tell Marchand about it over at the club." I was so devilish tired of his eternal *sauce délicieuse*, his *sauce aigre*, his *sauce écossaise* and the rest, don't you know.

The Professor inclined his head gravely.

"Ha, French! Then Monsieur Marchand has done something with the frog, has he?" he questioned.

"Twenty-nine different stunts," Billings replied proudly. "I know because I'm on the House Committee. Yes, sir, frogs are his specialty; that man can get more out of a frog than any other living man."

The Professor looked a little nettled.

"Oh, indeed!" he said rather coldly.

"I tell you, Professor, he's got 'em all skinned!" Billings enthused.

The remark provoked a contemptuous sniff.

"Undoubtedly, that being the proper condition preliminary to comparative

anatomical study," said the Professor loftily. "Then the physical resemblance to a man becomes startling. I have identified every analogy with man except the beautiful phenomenon of the beating of the frog heart twenty-four hours after separation from the body—the living body, sir. Experiment upon the living human specimen is necessary for confirmation of the homologous structure of the two hearts, however. This I have not done—not yet."

He spoke gloomily. I looked at Billings blankly but I found Billings was looking at me the same way.

Every once in a while he had been lifting the pajamas. He would cough and open his mouth, but just then the Professor would start off again. Once Billings, with an awfully savage expression, shook his fist at our visitor's back and danced up and down upon the rug.

"The indifference, not to say prejudice, of the public upon the matter of human vivisection is heartrending," went on the Professor sadly. "Sir, I have advertised in the 'help wanted' columns of the daily press, and have interviewed scores without arousing one spark of ambition or awakening one thrill of gratitude over the opportunity offered to assist me in the investigation of scientific phenomena. I pleaded, sir; I reproached; I even showed them the demonstration upon the frog. Did I move them? Were they affected, do you think?"

I shook my head sympathetically. Seemed the safe thing to do.

"A lot of pikers, by George!" said Billings with an air of indignation. "Must have been shameless!"

"Deuced indifferent," I ventured. "I should have been regularly cut up."

"Ah! of course you would," cried the Professor, lifting another pinch. "There speaks the intelligent devotee of science! But did they see it that way? Not at all, sir; they were only indifferent and ungrateful—they were rude and—ah—boisterous! One savage primate assaulted me with his bare knuckles. A

blow, gentlemen, a blow from the boasted family of anthropina!"

"Beastly outrage, Professor," growled Billings. "Leave it to me; I know a chap who's got a pull with the Police Commissioner, and I'll just tip him off, by George. It's no matter what family they are or how much they boasted. It'll be the hurry wagon and the cooler for them, eh, Dicky?"

He gestured to me wildly, nodding his head like a man with the what's-its-name dance.

"Deuced good idea. Awful rotters, I say," was my comment.

The Professor seemed affected by our sympathy.

He withdrew from his pocket a folded handkerchief, slowly opened it and pressed it lightly to each eye. Then he carefully refolded and replaced it.

"Strange thing, the persistence of the primitive emotions," he said, sniffing thoughtfully. "Singular how they affect the lachrymal *apparati*. Peculiarly disagreeable taste, gentlemen, that of tears, despite their simple elementary composition—ninety-nine and six-tenths per cent water, you remember, and the rest a modicum of chloride of sodium, mucus, soda and phosphates. H'm! Your pardon, gentlemen, for this digression, but to have sustained a stab under this very roof from *genus homol*! It is indeed hard."

Here Jenkins, who had been lingering and busying himself about the apartment, whispered to me from behind:

"It's that dago, sir, that delivers fruit every day."

"Eh?"

"That's the name. I see him going back every morning."

Jenkins moved off, nodding mysteriously, as I stared at him through my glass.

In his way, Billings was speaking words of comfort and all that sort of thing to the Professor.

"Never mind; the law will get 'em for you," he reassured him.

"Ah! that's just where you are in error," sighed our guest. "The law, sir, will not get a single subject for me. In this age of unrestrained liberty of all

classes, the law lends no aid whatever to science. It is not as it was in the glorious past when, under imperial patronage, Vesalius, the great father of anatomy, was protected when by mistake his scalpel cut the living heart of a Spanish grandee. Times worth while, gentlemen, those great days of supreme imperialism! Ah! there was no lack of material available if one stood in a little at court; one had only to designate a selection and the thing was done. Gracious, gentle times, my friends! Gone, alas, forever! Such opportunities are impossible under a republic."

The Professor shook his head and reached for his handkerchief again. But this time he only blew his nose.

"*Tempora mutantur*," he murmured regretfully. "Eh, gentlemen?"

"True," said Billings, pursing his lips. "Ah, how true!"

"By Jove, ought to be something done, you know," I declared.

"Out of millions, not a single human specimen available," groaned the Professor dismally. "And my instruments ready for over a year."

"Cheer up, sir; you'll have a go yet," Billings encouraged.

"Ah!" The Professor's little eyes swept Billings's person critically. "Perhaps you, sir, would like the privilege—"

Billings staggered back a step or two precipitately.

"Delighted; nothing'd give me greater pleasure, but so infernally busy," he explained hurriedly. "Just my confounded luck; unfortunately, got to go to Egypt right away—probably tomorrow morning."

The Professor sighed again in his disappointment.

"No matter; I shall find someone in time," he said grimly. "But I shall abandon this foolish persuasion and cajolery as unworthy of the scientist. Do we lower ourselves with such devices in securing a butterfly or a grasshopper or a frog or any animate specimen except man? Certainly not; we capture and etherize them."

He glanced about the room and beckoned us with his finger.

"I have lately had my eye upon the gas man," he said in a low tone. He closed one eye impressively.

"Ah!" said Billings, his mouth dropping open wide.

"The individual who comes at intervals to take the quarters from the slot meter. H'm, fine subject, gentlemen!"

"Great!" agreed Billings.

"Ripping idea," I tried as a reply.

The Professor clasped his fingers and rubbed his thumbs one over the other. He brightened visibly.

"The party has to go down upon his knees and stoop behind the end of the tub in the bath room," he continued. "It was my thought that while in that advantageous position, the sudden, quick application of a Turkish bath towel saturated in ether would —Eh? Do you follow me?"

"Devilish clever, you know," I said. I had already selected this for reply for this time.

Billings failed to come up. He just stared hard, rolled his eyes and ran his finger around under his collar.

The Professor, in the act of taking another pinch from my shirt front, paused with a little jerk. Then his great head shot forward in front of his rigid neck—so suddenly, by Jove, that I reached out to try to catch it, don't you know. He made just two strides to the table, ten feet away, and pounced upon the pajamas with obviously trembling hands.

And behind his back Billings relapsed into an armchair and fanned himself with a magazine.

His head dropped back, and upon his fat face was a what-you-call-it smile of peace. He closed his eyes for an instant.

"Suffering Thomas cats! At last!" I heard him murmur.

XVIII

THE Professor fumblingly sought through his pockets, and producing a pair of spectacles with phenomenally large lenses, adjusted them shakily.

He bent over the pajamas eagerly.

"Impossible! And yet, it is, it is!" he muttered. "I would know the weave among a thousand. It is hers undoubtedly, undoubtedly—the lost silk of Si-Ling-Chi! How comes it here?"

He glared around rather wildly at each of us in turn.

Without waiting for a reply, he whisked back to the pajamas, and fishing out a thick magnifying lens, scrutinized the garments closely. It seemed that he would certainly nod his big head off its jolly hinge; and his quick side glances at Billings and myself, together with his growling and muttering, just reminded me of a dog with a bone, by Jove!

I stared at Billings and Billings stared at me, and then he slipped over to the divan upon which I dropped, completely exhausted, dash it, from standing so long.

"Whose did he say?" he whispered.

"Celia something," I answered. "Dash it, I didn't catch her surname. Oh, I say, you know, this is awfull!"

I felt devilish mortified. Wondered what Frances might think, you know.

Billings drew in his lips and wagged his head ominously. He waved me nearer.

"He's on," he breathed behind his hand; "he's looking for her laundry mark. Now, wouldn't that feaze you?"

An exclamation of triumph from the Professor, another glance at us, and a hoarser and more prolonged mutter. I shifted uneasily. By Jove, I didn't like it at all!

Billings looked at me in consternation. "I wouldn't be in your shoes, Dicky," he whispered. "You'll be pinched for this, sure."

"Oh, I say, now! I tell you, a friend in China—"

Billings shrugged impatiently. "Just a plant, you chowder head," he said, viewing me pityingly. "I tell you that's how all these blackmailing schemes are worked. You ought to be more careful."

"But, dash it, I don't even know her, this Celia what's-her-name," I protested miserably. If her brother

thought that way, what would *she* think?

"Um! Maybe you don't, but they'll expect you to say that, anyhow. You're up against it, old chap; the Professor here evidently knows her and he knows her pajamas—relative, probably."

By Jove, I felt a little faint!

"It will be all over New York tomorrow," continued Billings gloomily. "Your picture and hers will be in the extras."

Out of the Professor's mutterings we caught a random sentence.

"Found, found again," we heard him say. "Hers beyond peradventure of a doubt. I am *not* mistaken."

Billings rose, and his beckoning finger summoned me to a corner of the room.

"This is going to cost you a lot of money, Dicky," he said with a serious air, "to say nothing of the scandal. My advice is, try buying him off—best thing in the long run. I'll feel him for you."

Nodding solemnly to me he cleared his voice. "H'm! I say, Professor."

The Professor, with his eye glued to the lens and the lens to the silk, turned slowly about.

"H'm!" began Billings. "The—h'm—articles you have there—you recognize where they are from—eh?"

"Of course," he snapped, without looking up.

"H'm! And whose did I understand you to say—I—er—did not catch her name."

His glance uplifted and scoured us sourly.

"Si-Ling-Chi. Did you think I did not know? I recognized at sight her wonderful disappearing weave." He bent again with his lens. "Marvelous, indeed, after all these years," he muttered. "So long, so long! Incredible preservation!"

Billings placed his finger against his nose, rolled his eyes upward and emitted the faintest of whistles. He caught my arm sharply.

"Say, how old are you, Dicky?" he whispered excitedly.

"I—er—twenty-seven, I think, old chap," I replied hesitatingly.

Billings noiselessly slapped his leg. His face brightened.

"Been of age six years," he calculated to himself. "By George, maybe you can prove an alibi!"

He coughed again at the absorbed figure stooping over the table.

"Ah, Professor—h'm—how long now would you say it might be since—well, she you mention—how long a time since she last saw—er—what you have there —eh?"

"How long?" repeated the Professor absently. Then he moved, but his hand only, and he flipped it, don't you know, as one does to banish a fly or a dashed mosquito—that sort of thing, by Jove!

"Can't you figure it out 'yourself?' he questioned irritably. "You remember chronology gives Hwang-Si's reign as in the twenty-sixth century before Christ; and of course, that of Si-Ling-Chi, his empress, would be the same."

Billings subsided limply into a chair.

"Great Thomas cats!" he gasped weakly.

"I think I divine the astute purpose of your inquiry," said the Professor, pausing to polish his glasses and favoring us with a wintry smile. "It does not deceive me. You have in mind, sir, the erroneous chronology that places Si-Ling-Chi thirteen centuries earlier. Ha! Is not my suspicion correct?"

"Regular bull's-eye!" responded Billings. "I mean," he added hastily, "what's the use of denying it?"

"Twenty-six centuries before the Christian era is the best we can give Si-Ling-Chi," said the Professor, carefully affixing his glasses and falling once more upon the pajamas.

"By Jove!" I said dazedly. "Then the lady—er—I mean the party—she's rather far back—er—isn't she, don't you know?"

The Professor answered abstractedly:

"Two thousand years before Confucius; twenty-four hundred and twenty-nine years before the building of the Great Wall," he murmured mechanically.

Jove, but I was relieved! I looked inquiringly at Billings. He just sat there kind of drooping, and shook his head. "I'm all in," he motioned with his lips; and he wiped his forehead.

"Ah, gentlemen!" exclaimed the Professor, coming back again, "what a thing this little Chinese woman did for civilization when she gave the world silk culture and invented the loom! No wonder the Chinese deified her as a goddess."

"Goddess!" Billings swallowed hard. "And did these—h'm—garments belong to the lady?"

The Professor frowned at him in surprise. "Garments?"

"Them," said Billings in devilish questionable grammar, pointing to the table. "They are pajamas, you know."

"Ha!" ejaculated the Professor, holding them up. "So they are. You are very observing, sir, very. Now, I had not noticed that at all; I was so interested in the material itself—the wonderful silk of Si-Ling-Chi, gentlemen. Ha! Indeed a rare privilege!"

By Jove! He stroked the stuff lightly, tenderly—as one likes to do a little child's hair, don't you know.

"Beautiful, beautiful fabric," he sighed half to himself. "Only once before have I seen a piece of it—but it was enough; I could never, never forget." Something like a groan escaped him.

Billings angled his head toward me and tightly compressed one eye.

"H'm! Something in the petticoat line—eh, Professor?"

The Professor's face wrinkled with the most matter-of-fact surprise.

"Petticoat?" he piped querulously. "You are forgetting that the petticoat is a vestment unknown in China."

"Oh, in China! I was thinking of Paree," chuckled Billings, with a gay air and another glance at me. Then his nerve withered under the Professor's blank stare, and he added hurriedly:

"H'm! So it was in China you saw the other piece of silk?"

The Professor sighed profoundly. His reply came dreamily, regretfully:

"In the Purple Forbidden City; but I was not quick enough."

"Not quick enough?" Billings's echo was solicitous, sympathetic.

"It was among the palace treasures, the imperial properties—things unhappily lost to the world and civilization. Ah, gentlemen, I erred; I committed a fatal mistake; it has been a matter of deep mortification to me often!" His head wagged somberly.

Billings looked a little embarrassed and rubbed his chin. "H'm!" he coughed. "I guess we all slip a cog now and then. I know I've done things myself I've been rather ash—"

"I erred, gentlemen," went on the Professor, "in trusting most unscientifically to the false principle that the hand is quicker than the eye. It is *not* true, for one of the guards saw me and my carelessness cost me dearly: I not only lost the silk, but a singularly beautiful gold thread altar cloth and a matchless amulet of *yu-chi* jade, you know—white jade, at that, gentlemen, I assure you—a rare bit of carving of the second century—real Khoton jade, too—no base *fei-tsui*. But, alas! I lost them, my friends; they confiscated them, and no doubt they are still there in their original places from which I had—a—attached them. Do you wonder at my mortification? And then the sacrifice of a whole year of planning, watching, bribing and perfecting of preliminary disguise! All fruitless, fruitless!"

The Professor lifted and dropped his palms in eloquent deprecation.

Billings's foot pressed mine. "Now, wouldn't that frost you?" he whispered under his breath. Aloud he exclaimed indignantly:

"Beastly outrage; it must have been painful."

The Professor started in the act of lifting the pajamas again.

"Pain? I did not speak of the physical consequences. They were too terrible to discuss. I—"

The pajamas dropped from his hands and his eyes took on that somewhere-else, far-off look, don't you know.

"Sort of 'third degree' work, Professor?" Billings prodded him.

The Professor did not reply. His long, slim fingers swept his forehead for an instant and he looked away again, his little eyes dilated. Somehow it made one feel devilish uncomfortable, dash it!

Billings cocked his eye at me and lifted his shoulders in a shrug. Then he deliberately kicked at the tabourette and sent its brass fixture set clattering noisily across the room.

The Professor shivered, compressed his lips and blinked at us.

"Your pardon, gentlemen," he observed in some confusion. "Someone was asking me—"

"What they did to you when you lift—I mean when you lost the—er-loot."

He stared, shivered again and returned to the pajamas, muttering an almost inaudible reply.

We caught a word or two: "Long imprisonment—much physical pain—unspeakable things—do not like to think of it—I—"

His eyes closed. He folded his long, thin arms shudderingly.

Billings and I sat very still.

The Professor's voice came as from far away:

"I could tell you of some experiences in China and in Tibet," he murmured. "Perhaps I—some other time—such horrible details, I—"

He leaned heavily upon the table with both hands. His head dropped forward an instant.

"No matter *now*," he muttered. "It was long, long ago!"

XIX

"GEORGE!" breathed Billings, breaking a curious, tense silence.

The Professor suddenly faced us, holding up the pajamas with a gesture of inquiry.

"From a friend of Mr. Lightnut's in China," Billings explained.

Aside, he whispered hurriedly: "Don't say a word about the rubies! You heard

him—murder, grand larceny or arson—it's all one to the old gazabé! Anybody can see that. He doesn't let little things like those stand in the way of getting what he wants!" He frowned warningly.

"H'm! In the neck, Professor—I mean inside the collar," he said, approaching the table—"there's some kind of freak lettering. Looks foolish to me."

The Professor looked perplexed.

"I mean, looks like it was done by someone who was batty—had wheels, you know; probably some chink whose biscuit was drifty," floundered Billings. "You understand!"

The Professor didn't. I knew that jolly well by the way he cocked his head on one side, standing like a puzzled crow, don't you know.

"Ha! I fear I do not as I should," he said with an apologetic cough. "Perhaps I do not intelligently and logically follow your deductions because your premises are inscrutable until I have seen the lettering. Ah!"

Out came glasses and lens again and he bent over the collar eagerly.

"H'm! The *Hwuy i*, or ideographic characters, rather than the ideo-phonic!" He looked up at Billings and myself inquiringly. "Ha! I trust we start together in accord upon that conclusion, eh, gentlemen?"

Billings nodded emphatically.

"Surest thing you know," he declared firmly, and whispered to me triumphantly: "Didn't I tell him it was idiotic?"

The Professor's lips moved rapidly and his visage twisted into a horrible frown.

"Why, why—a—what!" With mouth open, and gripping the pajamas tightly, he glared at us each in turn.

"Oh, impossible!" he rasped harshly, seizing the lens and bending again. "Incredible—poof—absurd—tut, tut, what nonsense!"

The glass swept the lines rapidly. Suddenly, with a cry, the Professor dropped the lens, a violent start almost lifting him from the floor.

"*Papauhegopoulos!*" he cried explosively, and whirling on us again.

Dash me, if I didn't fall back a step, his eyes rolled so wildly. But Billings stood his ground, by Jove!

"I didn't quite catch—" he began hesitatingly, angling his bristly red head forward and smiling pleasantly.

The Professor seemed abashed of a sudden.

"H'm! Your pardon, gentlemen! Merely an expletive—h'm—a Greek word I indulge in sometimes when—when excited; a weakness, I might say. H'm!" He seized his lens again.

Billings's eyes yielded admiration.

"Great Scott, Dicky!" he whispered in my ear. "See what a thing education is! Think of being able to swear in Greek—in Greek, Dicky!" Billings's voice expressed awe. "Why, he's got an Erie Canal skipper backed clear off the board, and if he wanted to turn loose, I'll bet he could make a certain railway president I know look like a two-spot!"

At this point the Professor struck his fist angrily upon the pajamas. The face that he turned was unnaturally flushed and his chin quivered excitedly.

"Ridiculous, I say! Poof!" He snapped his fingers. "Necromancy and thaumaturgy transmitted in pajamas! Absurd!"

"Piffle!" said Billings emphatically. "Don't know what they are," he whispered to me, "but I'll take a hundred-to-one shot on anything he says. The Professor's a corker!"

"By Jove!" I remarked. "Perhaps Professor Huckleberry won't mind telling us—"

"What I think, gentlemen? What could I think but what I am sure is your own conclusion—though you have generously and considerately left me to form my own opinion—namely, that the claim of supernatural attributes of these garments is preposterous. Enchanted pajamas! Haunted pajamas! Poof! Nursery lore; children's fairy tales! Ghosts, gentlemen? Tut, tut—nonsense!"

He snorted indignantly.

"Ghosts!" faltered Billings.

"Oh, I say!" I rather gasped. Dash me if it didn't give me a turn, rather!

The Professor shrugged his shoulders.

"What other interpretation is admissible, gentlemen?" he questioned somewhat peevishly, taking up the coat. "Here we have the royal insignia of the cruel emperor, Keë, and we note that these garments were given someone in his court by the alleged sorcerer, Fuh-keen. Perhaps it was revenge—perhaps some court plot in which Fuh-keen, for reasons of his own, was an active participant; it is of no importance, that part of it. So much for the first line; but now we come—"

He paused to polish his spectacles.

"Tell me," he said more cheerfully, "do our free translations of the ideographs so far agree in essentials—eh?"

"Like as two peas!" Billings declared with manifest enthusiasm.

The Professor looked gratified and bowed.

"Of course, the rendition is entirely a free one," he remarked. "You must not expect too much."

"Devilish handsome and clever of him!" I whispered to Billings, as the Professor proceeded to adjust his spectacles. "Dash it, I wish he'd let me pay him, though."

"Forget it!" hissed Billings. "Didn't he just say it was free? He's no cheap skater, I tell you."

The Professor resumed:

"Now we come to the second line, or, more strictly speaking, column," he said, straightening impressively. "Here we find the astonishing claim made that there will be a change or metamorphosis of any kind of animal life that these habiliments enshroud. Um!"

The great man breathed heavily and batted at us over his glasses.

"*Credat Judeus apella*—eh, gentlemen?" And he winked knowingly. Dashed if he didn't almost catch me swallowing a yawn, too! For I hadn't any idea what he was talking about or driving at, and, by Jove, I did know I was getting devilish sleepy.

The Professor waved his glasses. "Did you ever read such a childish, ridiculous, extravagant asseveration?" he demanded.

"Ass—eh? I should say so!" I worked this off indignantly.

"Tommyrot!" murmured Billings absently. He seemed thoughtful.

I was thoughtful, too—wondering, by Jove, whether the Professor would go soon, so we could turn in and get the earlier start tomorrow up the river. But chiefly I was wondering wistfully if Frances would still be angry with me.

"Moreover," broke in the Professor's voice as he turned again to the lettering, "to assert further that there will be a semblance—not actual, gentlemen, mind you, but an optical illusion—taking the form of some creature of the same kind that this silken tenement has previously inclosed."

"In other words, gentlemen, if I were to don these garments, I might no longer look like myself but like someone else who had worn them upon some previous occasion—perhaps last night—perhaps a thousand years ago. Eh? Is that what you understand?"

He ducked again over the letters and came up, looking chagrined.

"Moreover, I am forced to confess, gentlemen, that I fail to find a system—any rule governing these ridiculous transformations. The hypothesis is, therefore, that the alleged materializations merely follow the arbitrary caprice of the magic." He shook his head. "Well, gentlemen, I—really, I must laugh!"

And he did! I hadn't caught the drift of what it was he thought he was laughing at—I got the words, but I was too dashed sleepy to get the sense. But I was awfully glad I understood this much—that what he was attempting now *was* a laugh. I never would have known it. It was more like a shrieking squeak—rusty hinge, you know, that sort of thing.

"First-time-I've-laughed-in - twenty-years! His shrill cackle ran a treble scale that ended in high C. I know you—you won't believe it!"

"Believe it?" said Billings drily. "I'd bet a purse on it." He whispered to me: "Don't need any affidavit; it *shows*. Sounds like a country wagon on

a down grade, brake on, and shrieking like a banshee."

Behind me the door opened slightly. I turned to see Jenkins, looking devilish chalky and a little wild-eyed. He lifted a coil of stout sash cord questioningly.

"Eh? Why, no!" I whispered through the opening. "He's just *laughing*. Don't be a jolly ass!" And I closed the door sharply.

The Professor looked up from the pajamas, and folding his arms, eyed Billings with a cunning leer.

"I think I see," he said, leveling his finger. "You have both demonstrated how nonsensical is the assertion in this inscription. Doubtless you desire an experiment upon my part to confirm your proof of its absurdity. *Reductio ad absurdum*—eh, gentlemen?"

Billings looked at me but I couldn't help him. Why, dash it, I didn't even know yet what the inscription was. And, by Jove, I didn't know what experiments he wanted to try with the pajamas, but I didn't care. He could boil them, if he wanted to, if he would only let us get to bed.

So at random I just nodded eagerly.

"Excellent!" The Professor's chuckle sounded like dice rattling in a metal box. "An excellent jest upon this fellow, Fuh-keen, to furnish a demonstration by twentieth-century scientists of the presumption of his claims of necromancy and thaumaturgy. You have done so—now I will do so, in turn. Eh, gentlemen?"

I hadn't the ghost of an idea what he was talking about. Fact is, I was thinking of my darling and wondering if she was asleep. By Jove, I wished that *I* was!

But a devilish queer look had come into Billings's face. He nodded, gathered the pajamas into the Professor's arms and patted him on the shoulder in a way I thought offensively familiar.

"You've got it, Professor!" he said, grinning.

Then he whispered to me aside:

"Not a word, Dicky—great Scott!" But he needn't have said that, even if I had been mind reader enough to guess what word he meant. It was about all

I could do to get out a last word to the Professor as he went out the door:

"Night!"

XX

TEN minutes later I was almost wide awake, for Billings was talking over long distance—and to *her!*

But I did not like the way he did it.

"Shut up, Francis!" he bellowed. "Now you listen to what I'm telling you—and do *just* as I tell you to, too—if you don't, I'll mash your face when I come up there! You hear?"

And he swore at her—yes, by Jove, *swore!*

"Oh, here—I say now!" I remonstrated indignantly.

"It's all right, Dicky," and he waved his fat hand indifferently as he hung up the receiver. "Francis wants to drive that car down for us in the morning—Francis, now!" And his hands went out impressively.

And dash it, I *was* impressed—I was delighted.

"By Jove!" I cried. "Fine!" For I knew by that that she had forgiven me.

"Fine!" snorted Billings. "You don't know what you're talking about! Francis hasn't got sense enough to get a road engine ten feet without smashing it, much less a car twenty-five miles."

"Oh, look here!" I growled protestingly, "I don't like to hear you talking about—er—Francis that way."

Billings grunted and bit a cigar savagely without stopping to clip it. He pulled fiercely at it a moment.

"Kind of you, old chap," he exclaimed, "but you don't know our family as *I* do. If Francis has got a headache *now*, I know that by morning—"

"Headache?" I cried in dismay.

He nodded. "So I understood over the phone—been getting at the governor's private stock, I'd bet all I've got." He shook his head gloomily. "No, sir; that car cost five thousand, and when you can't trust people sober, how are you going to trust them drunk?"

I sighed as I remembered the half pint of whiskey she had taken—but, dash it,

I didn't care! It somehow didn't seem to make any difference in my loving her. The only thing important, really, in the matter of the car was that she might hurt herself. Billings didn't seem to think of that. And yet, by Jove, she *wanted* to come! She *must!*

"See here," I said coaxingly, for Billings seemed to have gone off in a moody, brown study, "you must remember, old chap, your sister has been cooped up there in Radcliffe for months. Why not let her have the run down to the city and back? It will do her good, you know."

"Of course," he said absently. "She's going to drive the car down."

"Eh—what say?" I was sure I had not heard aright.

"I say she's going to bring the car down—my chauffeur's sick, it seems."

I didn't wonder at that; but I *did* wonder at his sudden change.

"Then you're not afraid—"

"Afraid? I should say not! She can drive better than I can—better than anybody in Westchester County!"

"I see—I see!" I said in a low voice. And I *did* see, poor fellow! And by Jove, my spirits sank to zero.

"Yes, *there's* somebody you can always rely on!" he enthused under his changing mood. "Good thing in this blankety world there's *somebody* you can rely on—among women, I mean. There's a girl with a purpose in life—yes, sir! Never dances, plays bridge nor uses slang—no, sir! And what's more, in this cursed age, she's one woman who can go through life and say she never touched a cigarette or a cocktail."

"Of course—of course!" I agreed soothingly. By Jove, it was a devilish sight better to have him talk this way about her. I wouldn't antagonize anything he might say now. And I had turned his mind just by a simple hint—the power of suggestion, you know. Just as I had myself forgotten I was sleepy.

"Of course, you never have met my sister, have you?" he puffed. "I mean the one that's been up at Radcliffe."

"Oh, *never!*" I said promptly.

"You will in the morning," said Bil-

lings, flicking his ash. "Not much to look at—I mean not what you would call handsome—"

I interrupted. "Oh, but I say," I exclaimed unguardedly, "how can you say that? I think she's just beautiful."

"Eh?" He stared so hard I was afraid I had got his mind off again. "Thought you said you had never met her."

"No, no, I never did," I stammered. "Mistake, you know."

He went on musingly: "But I understand that her roommate—who has come home with her, by the way—is a peach. English girl, you know. They tell me Francis is crazy about her beauty."

Dashed if I could see how she could be, for, by Jove, I had seen her myself. It was the frump! Peach? She was a *fright!*

Here Billings's eyes hung on the ceiling as though he would bore through it.

"Say, do you know"—he dropped his voice, still looking up—"I hope the old gazabe up there won't get wise to those rubies. Awfully careless of us—forgot all about them. By George, I've half a mind to go up there and get the pajamas back."

"Oh, dash it, no!" I protested, for I was getting sleepy again. "It's the silk the old fellow was interested in; he wants to examine it—try some experiments—something. He'll never think of the jolly rubies, you know."

Billings looked at me oddly. "That's so," he agreed. "Still, I know I won't sleep thinking about those rubies." Then he looked up at the ceiling again and muttered; "Wonder if the old boy will have any visitors tonight?"

I yawned. I knew it wasn't likely—not with *him!*

Billings rose. "Well, I'll get along over to the club, old chap. Now mind, the car will call for you about nine. Then you are to pick me up. And, oh, say, Dicky!" He turned back from the door where Jenkins waited with his hat and cane. "Speaking of pajamas—er—what do you think of black ones—eh?"

By Jove, I got red—could just feel it, you know!

"Ever see a suit of black silk pajamas?" Billings chuckled.

Now for it! "I—I—never did," I managed to get out.

"Never heard of any myself before," Billings gurgled. "But great idea, don't you think? Good thing, traveling—Pullmans, hotels—that sort of thing—eh? Just got them today—ordered two weeks ago."

By Jove, what a relief! I felt myself breathing again.

"Wish you would stay," I said, for I felt uneasy about him.

"Oh, no," carelessly; "all my traps are over there, you know." He smiled. "To say nothing of the new pajamas."

Standing in the door, he looked upward again, twirling his cane. His head shook dubiously.

"Could kick myself about those rubies," he grumbled. "Just half a mind to go up there—" He shrugged. "Oh, well, good night, old chap; see you in the morning."

I murmured some reply as I followed him without. Then I stood a moment looking down the shaft after he had descended.

"Hope he'll be all right in the morning," I mused. "And hope his infernal mood won't shift round again as to Frances!"

XXI

"*ARE you sure, Mr. Lightnut?*"

I stood, cap in hand, one foot on the sidewalk before the Kahoka, the other on the running board of the car—a big double-tonneau red whale sort of affair. This was as far as I had been admitted to the vehicle.

For the frump was sitting there behind the steering wheel, looking down at me in a nasty, sidewise fashion. Ever have them do you that way? Besides, I somehow felt that she had a feeling toward me as a man, an unvoiced protest against my existence at all. It found expression in her suspicious, sniffy manner. Dash it, I just hated that woman from the start! I felt it was

bad enough, her English clumsiness in getting the introductions twisted as I advanced to meet the car, but now I was of half a mind that she had done it purposely. Could see with half an eye that she was determined to make trouble about yesterday.

"Haven't we met before, Mr. Lightnut?" she had asked.

But it struck me that Frances glanced at me with a kind of wistful light in her lovely eyes, and I saw that the game was to lie like a gentleman—that sort of thing, you know. And, by Jove, I was getting kind of used to it now, anyhow—I mean since I had broken the ice last night. Not hard at all, though, after a few goes—really!

So I stood out that I had never had the pleasure, you know—all that sort of polite rot. And all the time felt like a jolly cad, too, meeting a girl with that, when *she* remembered! But, by Jove, it was worth sacrificing the frump fifty times over just to see Frances's face brighten and note her faint flush and smile as she looked at me. For, dash it, I knew then I had done the right thing!

"Um!" grunted the frump, compressing her lips and looking at my darling. "There's one good thing: the experience with Mr. Smith will teach Frances a lesson!"

The cat! Nice sort of host!

But the dear girl just laughed—how I remembered that laugh!

"Poor Frances!" she said lightly. "Do you know," she added, "I believe I can forgive a Harvard man almost anything, Mr. Lightnut."

By Jove! The angel! And before I knew what I was doing or thought about the frump, I had stretched out a hand to her, looking her straight in the eye and smiling. She hesitated an instant only, then laughed, and I felt her little fingers just brush my palm—but it was enough.

She flushed a little shyly and addressed the frump.

"Are we going to keep Mr. Lightnut standing like this all day?" she asked.

"Half on earth and half in heaven—like what's-his-name's coffin," I suggested. Devilish good, that, don't you think? *She* thought so, for she opened

the door herself as the frump turned murmuring some silly thing about China and the open door to America. What did China have to do with it?

And it was just then that Jenkins bolted wildly from the building.

"Mr. Lightnut—quick, sir! Mr. Billings, sir!"

I thought of the telephone right off, but he just caught my arm. First time ever knew Jenkins to take a liberty.

"Come quick, sir!" he exclaimed. "He's upstairs and, oh, off his nut, sir—awful!"

"By Jove!" I gasped. "Excuse me—will see—come right back and tell you—I feared this last night." And I rushed to the elevator with Jenkins.

"He's in them black pajamas he was talking about," said Jenkins gloomily, "and he's run the Perfesser off. Leastwise, he ain't there, and his man can't get Mr. Billings to go. He came down for me, but I couldn't do a thing with him, either."

I knew—I understood. It was the dwelling of his mind upon the rubies! He had gone back in the night for them—in his sleep, for all I knew. But I thought most likely awake, for recent experience with him showed me that he didn't think anything of wandering around the neighborhood in his pajamas.

The janitor's pale face met us at the landing.

"I've sent for the police, sir, and it would be a good idea, don't you think, if you could get him away before they come. I don't want to get Mr. Billings into no trouble."

"Good idea," I agreed. "We'll just rush him to the car—but, h'm!"

I suddenly remembered he was in pajamas. It might be all right to Billings to wander around in public streets and vehicles in his night things, but it certainly wouldn't do under the present circumstances. *He* might not care, but then, there were the feelings of the girls to consider. And besides, dash it, I had some sort of idea it was against the law.

I stood there in the corridor, puzzling.

"We must get his clothes," I said to Jenkins. "No, wait, *wait*—not time! I want to get him away before the police

get here. Um—dressing robe—bath robe—can't you get something of that sort—quick?"

Jenkins shook his head distractedly. "Thought of that, sir—no use—noting anywhere around here would half-way meet on Mr. Billings."

Here the Professor's man interposed. "Please hurry, sir; he's going through the Professor's papers and things!" I dashed for the apartment, shouting to Jenkins to get a bundle of rugs and blankets to the car.

Billings was standing by the window looking at a glass thermometer that he had just withdrawn from his mouth.

"Um!" he grunted complacently. "Ninety-seven and a quarter—my usual healthy subnormal temperature. Pulse sixty-five—respiration, twenty-four and two-fifths—excellent, excellent! I am myself. Ha!" And he whirled triumphantly.

"Ah!" he said, advancing eagerly and rubbing his hands. "It is you! You have heard, then? Marvelous, isn't it—wholly incredible! But do you know"—here he plucked at my shirt front, took a pinch, as it were, just as he had seen the Professor do—"I cannot find any transmigration. The materialization appears to be wholly optical."

"Never mind," I said anxiously, for I knew he was talking about the rubies; "we don't care." I smiled brightly. "Let's go down and see the car—*nice car!*" And I tried to get hold of his fat side, but missed it.

"Car?" Billings looked puzzled. Then his face broke into a smile. "*Carpe diem*—eh, am I not right? True, true! Whither you say?" He looked about on a table. "Um—my notes, now," he muttered; and he caught up a small book and a pencil.

The Professor's man protested: "Professor Doozenberry don't like—"

"Oh, dash it, let him have them!" I exclaimed, for Billings was already chuckling happily and writing in the little blank book.

"Come on," I pleaded, catching a fold of the pajamas. "Wouldn't you like to come get some clothes on?"

He drew back in alarm. "No, no—

not yet—not until I complete my notes," was his crazy answer. "You know: *sublata causa, tollitur effectus!*" And he looked as though he thought this would finish me.

"But your friend," he exclaimed suddenly, as he allowed me to throw a blanket about his shoulders and we moved out of the door, "the gentleman I met last night—Billings—is not that the name?"

I looked at him miserably as we entered the car to go down.

"Oh, I say, Billings, old chap," I protested earnestly, "don't you know me?" I pointed to the little panel of mirror in the cage. "Don't you know you are Billings? Can't you *see*?"

His fat head pecked at the glass for an instant. Then he looked at me with eager, batting eyes. He chuckled hoarsely, gurglingly, and out came the notebook and pencil from his sleeve.

"Better and better," he muttered. "Now, if we could only go to *him!*" He caught my arm. "In the interest of this investigation of scientific phenomena, would he consider a call intrusive—could we not seek your friend, Mr. Billings?"

"It's all right, you know," I gently reassured him. "Yes, we're going to him—going right there. Just a little ride, you know."

By Jove, the way he cackled made my heart ache! I whispered to Jenkins to run ahead and prepare the ladies. But the first thing we saw as the cage hit the bottom was a woman—and, dash it, the frump from China!

She gave a little scream and fell on Billings's neck, almost bearing him to the ground.

"Oh, Jacky, Jacky!" she sobbed.

By Jove, I almost fell myself! So *that* was the way the wind lay! And I had never even so much as suspected. *That* was why he had raved so about her beauty! Beauty! Poor old Jack! If I had been sad about him before, it was a devilish sight worse now—

Worse? Why, dash it, she *kissed* him!

And to see him standing there, kind of batting and rolling his eyes and looking like a girl does when she's trying a

strange piece of candy out of the box—oh, it just broke me all up!

No wonder he was crazy! Why, dash it, he would *have* to be crazy!

He was muttering to himself.

"Remarkable!" I heard. "Singularly sensate and exhilarating! Now, I never would have thought—um!"

And then he very deliberately took her head between his hands and—kissed her. Then he looked up at the ceiling thoughtfully and did it again—like a chicken drinks water—you know!

And then while we—that is, Jenkins and I—were trying to urge him on, out came the notebook again and he scribbled rapidly, muttering audibly: "Labial osculation—extraordinary stimulation—sensatory ganglia—mucous membrane—"

"Police!" I whispered brutally in the frump's ear. "Better let's get him away!" And, by Jove, that woke her out of her trance! In two minutes she had cajoled him to the car and we had him inside on the cushions. We bunched blankets and rugs about him to hide the pajamas.

"Jacky, dear," gushed the Chinese freak, "wouldn't you like for me to sit by you and hold your poor hand?"

It looked as if he would.

The frump turned to me. "Can you drive the car, Mr. Lightnut?"

Could I? Well, I would show her! Especially as Frances had changed to the front as she saw us bringing out Billings.

"Take the train—get Billings's things from the club," I called to Jenkins. "Sharp, now! And here, unhook that number there on the back—give it here!"

Jenkins hesitated. "I think there's a heavy fine, sir," he hinted.

I snapped my fingers at him and he jumped to obey.

"Worse things than a jolly fine," I said, looking at poor Billings smirking crazily over the frump. I threw the number plate into the car.

And just in time!

Around the corner whirled a policeman—and, by Jove, no less than that fat Irishman, O'Keefe! With him was the Professor's man.

"Don't tell me," panted the officer; "I know my—"

And then he gave a shout and sprang for the car.

"It's that fellow that was prowling around the station house!" he yelled. "Here, stop there!"

But I didn't want to. For one thing, we were a half-block away, and I had badly coasted a towel supply wagon and scattered the wares of a push cart across three sidewalks.

My cap went flying as we skidded a corner, and I was devilish glad, for the inertia threw Frances's head almost against mine and I felt the tickling brush of a little hair wisp as it swept my nose.

Her eyes were dancing with excitement. She looked back, waving her hand at the figure of O'Keefe trotting from around the corner, and her laughter pealed joyously, deliciously in my ear.

"Oh, I think American men are great—are *wonderful!*" she cried, striking her little hands together. "Especially Harvard men—and especially—" She stopped with the faintest catch.

"By Jove!" I cried. "Do you mean it?"

And for the briefest instant the hands were three; but her scream brought me back to earth just in time to save the lives of a man and a boy. Devilish ungrateful, too, for I could see the man, three blocks behind, and still shaking his fist. The way with these pedestrians!

At Fifty-ninth Street we caromed with a hansom trotting too leisurely across the plaza, and I listened for nearly a block to the remarks of a bicycle cop before he dropped behind. What dashed me not a little was Billings's indifference to the record I was making for his car—didn't seem to care a jolly hang.

The frump was still hanging on him in a way to make you sick, and cooing and going on in a nervous, half-hysterical way I never would have thought her able to chirp up to. And Billings was holding her hand!

"Hello!" I called to him, just after we clipped Yonkers.

He looked up at me, smiling and nodding.

"Feel all right now, old man?" I inquired cheerily.

Billings looked at me hard, and then, dash it, he *winked!* And I began to wonder, by Jove, if it was just plain drunk.

XXII

THREE miles south of Irvington, Billings jumped wildly in the air and yelled for me to stop.

"A *coleoptieran!*" he shrieked excitedly, as I throttled down. "A *coleopteran* struck me in the eye—one of the *hydrophilidae* family!"

And hurling aside rugs and blankets, he twisted open the door and in a moment was in the road running back. It was then I went back to the crazy theory, for it was an open stretch of road and there wasn't a soul in sight. But it was so funny to see his fat figure waddling along there in the pajamas and bedroom slippers that Frances and I just threw back our heads and screamed. Couldn't help it, by Jove!

And the frump, jogging along behind, looked just as funny. I wasn't alarmed, for I knew she could control him. And, dash it, she did it by humorizing him! For we saw her twist her veil about the fork of the stick he extended to her, and both of them went to slapping wildly at the air and the ground. Presently they both came waddling back, she with a butterfly and he with a bug which he was craning at with a lens he had fished from his sleeve somewhere.

Billings got in and then I helped her. "Awfully jolly good of you to humor his crazy whims," I whispered gratefully.

"Crazy!" she ejaculated, one foot on the running board. "Why, he's just getting sane! He's been a born fool all his life! And now, Jacky, as you were saying of the *antenne*—" And she flopped eagerly by him and together they bent over the glass.

It was rum, but I was getting along so swimmingly with Frances that I didn't much care what they did. Seemed to be only about a minute more and we were

clipping through the curves of the Wolhurst park—Frances pointed the way—and had slowed down under the *porte cochère*.

The frump whispered to the man who opened the door.

"As quietly as possible, Wilkes," she said, "and without his father seeing him. You know what to do."

"I guess I do, miss," answered the butler gloomily. "I've *had* to do it often enough—Perkins and me. A good cold souse—that's the thing—and then bed. I know!"

Billings waved his hand to the frump as he mounted the stairway inside. And then, dash it, he kissed his fingers.

"*Vale!*" he chirped, leaning over the marble balustrade. "*Vale, sed spero non semper!* I will resume the discussion *in propria persona.*"

And, by Jove, if she didn't come back at him quick as lightning and with his own gibberish, too:

"*Confido et conquiesco!*" she cooed, waving her handkerchief.

Oh, it was tragical, dash it—that was the word, tragical! And yet the frump looked almost happy. And as for Frances, except for being amused, her brother's condition didn't seem to trouble her spirit at all. But then, dash it, I remembered she was used to him this way. She did not even wait, but with a bright smile and a murmured word to me, left her friend and myself to await Wilkes's report.

"It's all right, miss," he said, addressing the frump. "Perkins is with him, and we have persuaded him to have a bath and lie down." He turned to me. "If you will come with me, Mr. Light-nut—" Then he added, and it seemed a question: "I suppose you left the city before his father and brother reached there, sir. They left as soon as they got Mr. Jack's phone message." His voice dropped: "From the station house, you know."

The frump and I stared at each other.

"Jack's phone message—from the station house?" she repeated blankly. "What are you talking about, Wilkes?"

Wilkes coughed reproachfully. "Why, you know, miss," he protested, "he

said he had been arrested in front of the Kahoka Apartments. It was about—*h'm!*" He looked at me eloquently, and with an apologetic glance at the frump, whispered in my ear. "It was for—*h'm!*—stealing some black silk pajamas."

My monocle dropped, and I almost did myself.

"By Jove!" I gasped feebly.

"Yes, sir." Wilkes looked up at the paneled ceiling and stroked his chin. "I believe they found them—or *think* they found them in his bag he had with him at the club."

"But he's got them *on*, and they are his own," I managed to get out. I saw that it must have been Jenkins that telephoned and the message had been twisted. What he *had said*, of course, was that Billings had *almost* been arrested. But the finding the pajamas in that bag—I did not like that. I wondered whether, after all, Billings *had* found his sister's pajamas in the guest room and had quietly appropriated them. Or perhaps he, himself, had recovered them from Foxy Grandpa, and with more delicacy than I thought him capable of, had kept the whole matter to himself. Dash it, it was all a puzzle, and I spent a devilish anxious hour before I rejoined the girls in the living room.

A moment after, Wilkes entered with a parcel. He drew me aside.

"Pardon, sir, for bringing it here," he demurred, "but Mr. Billings is acting so queer, we are afraid to cross him; and he just insisted I take this to you at once, no matter where you were. He has locked Perkins and me out of his rooms, and wouldn't open the door only wide enough to stick this through. And his message"—hesitatingly—"he said just tell you you had better get those pajamas back where they came from just as quickly as you could—you would *if you were wise*, he said."

"Oh!" I uttered, and, by Jove, I was so mortified and floored I just dropped into a chair. So he *had* known! He had had them here at Wolhurst, and had waited for the moment when he would have me under his own roof and be able

to utterly confound me. This, then, explained his mental condition!

But there was more of the message—I could see it in Wilkes's eye.

"Yes, sir," he went on as I gave him a nod. "Mr. Billings called through the door crack—and his voice was particularly shrill—screechy-like—very unnatural, sir—and he said: 'You tell him I say he'll find it very dangerous to keep them by him a moment; tell him my advice is to return them *immediately!*'" Here the butler laid the parcel in my hands. He added: "And he said for me to try to remember three letters I was to mention—said you would understand."

"Three letters?" I repeated dully.

"Yes, sir, three letters—I did remember 'em, too, because they happened to be the initials of a young woman I—*h'm!* Q. E. D., sir."

"Q. E. D.?" I said, puzzled and miserable. "What's Q. E. D.?" And then an idea startled me.

"Oh, I *say*, you mean—er—P. D. Q.—eh, Wilkes?" It sounded like Jack!

But he seemed sure he didn't; insisted on Q. E. D. When he had withdrawn, I sat there a moment, swallowing hard. By Jove, when a chap has had the hardest blow of his life, and that, too, from his best friend, it's devilish hard to come up smiling. I took a deep breath and tried to pull myself together. I knew, of course, it was all over—everything; it was all over, just as everything was beginning with me. For I knew my life never had been worth a whoop before. Why, by Jove, I never even had noticed how beautiful were the trees and the sunshine through the leaves until today! But I *had* seen it, because *she* had seen it! And now—now it was all dull and flat and dead again, and all the world was gray! Ever been there—eh?

I climbed heavily to my feet, for I knew, after all, he was acting devilish considerately as *he* saw things, and I must just have the decency to do as he said—and then go. I couldn't explain, of course. Mustn't try to do that—so dashed clumsy, I would only complicate it for her. No, I—By Jove, I suddenly

felt sick—dropped my hand on a chair back hard, until I could stiffen and smile up. But, by Jove, she was on!

"Is anything the matter, Mr. Light-nut?" she asked, coming toward me—and how kindly, almost tenderly, her sweet face softened!

"Is it anything about Jacky?" snapped the frump.

I shook my head and just gently placed the little wrapped parcel in Frances's hands. My hand shook so I almost dropped it.

"Some—something of yours that was lost," I said, and I knew my voice shook a little, too. "I was fortunate in recovering it." I looked at her—for the last time, I knew—and it was just my devilish luck that she got misty and dim. I whispered hoarsely: "Open when you are alone."

And then I walked straight out of the house!

XXIII

A GARDENER directed me to the park gates, but there were so many dashed curves and terraces I got hopelessly twisted, and pretty soon didn't know whether I was leaving or coming, don't you know. I sat down on an iron bench to think it over, and, by Jove, I must have dozed off, for the first thing I knew someone yelled my name, and I looked up to see—Billings!

"What the devil are you doing, sitting here?" he demanded.

"I—I'm going," I said, hurriedly getting to my feet. "Just resting—I—"

"They told me I would find you here," he said. "Here you are, sitting out here in the hot sun without any hat! Good thing, Dicky, you haven't got any—h'm!" Then he panted at me: "Say, nice way you and my sister treated me—I don't think! But I'll forgive you this time." Here he linked his arm in mine. "I'll forgive you, if you never say anything at the club about those damned black pajamas."

"I wouldn't think of such a thing!" I exclaimed, immeasurably relieved but indignant, as well. He led me across the turf.

"Say, Dicky, I thought you and she were the devil of a long time coming—expected you right away, you know—and when you didn't show up, I got leary and came after you. Found you had lit out—gee, I was mad!"

I couldn't see why. Seemed to me the right, the only thing to do. I still thought so. And as for Frances and me going to him—absurd!

Billings drew a long face. "My, but the governor's hot, though!" he ejaculated. "Says for *me* never to talk to him again about Francis."

"Your father—is he here?" I stammered, pulling back.

"Thank goodness, no. Gone to meet Colonel Francis Kirkland—say, don't say anything about it—wants to surprise his daughter, you know. On his way to London via San Francisco—arrived at Washington a few days ago."

Oh, the frump's father! Much I cared! But knowing how interested *he* was in her, I tried to show an interest.

"Colonel Francis—er—isn't his daughter named after him?" And I felt myself grow jolly red, for I remembered that *she* had told me that as she sat on the arm of the Morris chair and in the black pajamas.

"Hanged if I know," said Billings carelessly. "I don't know what her name is—don't remember that I ever heard." He whistled. "Say, but did you ever see anything as stunningly pretty in your life?"

I balked. By Jove, I had been doing some mild lying within the past twenty-four hours, but this was asking *too* much! Dash me if I just could go it, that's all. But he didn't seem to notice.

He slapped me on the back. "By George, Dicky, there's just the girl cut out for you, old chap—take my tip. I think she likes you, too—could see it just now when I was talking about you."

So that was it, I reflected gloomily. The frump now was to be worked off on me, and I was expected to stand for it. I was to be a sort of what-you-call-it offering on the altar of friendship. That was the condition upon which he was patching up things!

Billings laughed suddenly. "But, oh,

I tell you it would be hard on Francis—a regular knockout, by George!"

Devilish brutal for him to say so, I thought.

"Do you think so?" I questioned dismissively. "Would Frances really care?"

"Oh, yes," he said lightly. "Soon get over it, though—puppy love, you know."

Puppy love, indeed! By Jove, how I hated Billings!

He went on: "Suppose you never heard anything of the Professor and the pajamas?"

I had not, and I was devilish sick of pajamas, anyway.

"And say, Dicky, I don't remember that I ever thanked you properly, old man, for putting up my kid brother the other night. He says you treated him like a brick and that you and he got to be great pals. So much obliged, old chap, because he wanted to go running around, you know."

"Your brother?" I questioned, astonished, and I guess my face must have showed it, for Billings's eyes, first opening wide, narrowed, and his countenance began to gather an angry red. He stopped short.

" *Didn't* he stay with you?" he snapped.

I stared blankly. "Why, Billings—I didn't know—I didn't remember you had a brother. I never have seen him."

Billings's big face swelled redder, and he struck his fist down with an oath. He looked angrily toward the house. Then he stepped hurriedly in advance of me.

"Excuse me, old chap, will you?" he said, his voice hardened. "Will see you at luncheon—make yourself at home, won't you?"

Make myself at home! I sneaked up into the loggia, and dropping into a chair, gazed gloomily out through the arches. What the devil was I going to do?

"Oh, here you are!" And she stood before me, her arms bourgeoning with roses. "See what I've been doing for you, sir!"

"For me?" By Jove, it was all I could say as I took them!

"And you ran off!" She pouted adorably—naturally, too, dash it. I've

seen them put it on when they looked like they had toothache. "How am I ever going to thank you about the pajamas?" By Jove, her big blue eyes looked me frankly in the face. There was never a quiver of embarrassment. "It's wonderful—and to find them *here!* I never expected to see them again. Oh, you must tell me all about how you managed it! I just *wish* father were here!"

I didn't! Dash it, it made me squirm to think of his return.

"Luncheon is served," intoned a human machine, and we went in.

From upstairs came sounds indicating great hilarity on Billings's part. In fact, we could hear him slapping his knee and screaming. The frump looked at me anxiously.

"Why, I understood he was all right again," she said aside.

I shook my head dubiously. I had seen in the past day or two how rapidly Billings's moods shifted. Twenty minutes since he had looked enraged.

"Oh, this is too good—but keep it mum!" we heard. "Come on, Professor!"

"Professor?" The frump looked at Frances, then at Wilkes inquiringly.

"I didn't know, miss," he murmured contritely. "S why I didn't mention it."

We were crossing the great hall in the direction of the beautiful dining room beyond—Elizabethan, I think Frances said it was. We all paused expectantly as Billings rolled down the stairs in his usual jolly, elephantine way. And then on the landing appeared an apparition—not only an apparition, but, by Jove, a scarecrow, as well!

Professor Doozenberry, blandly smiling—his raillike figure shrouded flabbily in one of Billings's largest and loudest suits! Billings went through the form of introductions, chuckling idiotically the while. But the Professor scarcely noticed anyone but the frump.

"Don't wait, Wilkes," Billings directed. His nod beckoned me aside.

"Gentleman sulking in his tent over here I want you to meet," he said. And I followed him to the library. A figure pacing the floor turned sharply. By

Jove, it was the chauffeur, and how he did scowl at me!

"Now, young man," said Billings sternly, "perhaps you'll have the nerve to tell me before Mr. Lightnut himself that you were his guest on your way home from Harvard."

"I certainly was!" He made the statement, chin up and eyes blazing. "I was his guest at the Kahoka Wednesday night, and he knows it."

Billings looked at me and shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't bother denying it, old man," he said. "It's all right."

"Oh, but I say—it isn't!" I exclaimed in disgusted amaze. "Dashed impertinence, you know—never saw this fellow except the morning at the—boat, and yesterday when I—" I halted, remembering.

But the fellow was shaking his finger at me.

"A-a-a!" he jeered like a schoolboy. "Why don't you finish? Bet you don't know, Jack, that this paragon friend of yours was up here on the train yesterday." Billings stared, for he did not know.

The chap grew more impudent. "Yah, see him turn red!"

"By Jove!" I exclaimed, warming up, you know. "Say, Billings, who the devil is this fellow?" And I advanced angrily—dashed annoyed, you know.

Billings interposed. "My brother," he said quietly.

"Yes, his brother," almost shouted the other. Then he lowered his voice at Billings's command: "And I say, you didn't tell Jack you were on the train yesterday, posing as a 'Mr. Smith,' and that you insulted Frances." He shook off his brother's hand angrily. "Oh, yes he did—sister told me about it! I knew it was you when I got to thinking about it this morning!" He panted for breath. "I can't call you a liar, Lightnut, when you say I wasn't at your rooms, because you're a quicker hitter than I am, and—" He looked around and shrugged. "And because we are in this house. But you're an infernal hypocrite, and I want Jack to know

it." He laughed mockingly and faced his brother. "Ask your friend, Mr. Lightnut, about that girl in black pajamas in his rooms!"

And he flung himself from the room with a Parthian shot: "Ask him to tell you about her as he did me."

Billings seemed to groan. "More black pajamas!" he muttered.

I faced him eagerly. "I never told him about her—I'll swear I didn't," I pleaded miserably. "You know all there is to know, Jack. I wouldn't tell anybody in the world a thing like that. I—love her too well. Much less would I go and tell her own brother."

"Wha-a-a-t?" Billings's fat body almost leaped into the air. "What the devil—say, old chap, *what* are you talking about?"

"And, besides, she's forgiven me," I persisted gloomily. "And I love her—and—and we're going to be married—or I hope so, dash it!"

Billings stared at me with popping eyes for an instant. Then he lifted my chin and looked at me anxiously. "Are you quite well, old man?" he asked solicitously. "Headache, or anything like that? By George, it's from sitting out in that sun without a hat. Marry my sister?" He wagged his head lugubriously. "What—Elizabeth? Oh, good heavens!"

"No—Frances," I explained anxiously.

He stared. "Francis?" Then his arm led me out. "Come along, old chap," he said with an air of concern. "We'll get a little ice—"

There was a bustle near the hall entrance, and I heard a commanding voice I recognized as that of Judge Billings:

"Come right in, Colonel, and we will try to make you forget that little exasperation—Hello, Jack! Colonel Kirkland, my eldest boy, Jack—named after his mother, Johanna. Look here, Jack, has everybody on the blithering police force gone crazy about *pajamas*? Most infernal outrage—pardon me, Colonel Kirkland—three policemen wanted to arrest him on description—dragnet order, they said—for stealing a pair of

black silk pajamas. Ever hear the like of that?"

Billings's voice murmured something, and then I was dully conscious of my name being passed and of the fact that I was limply shaking a hand. But I don't remember uttering a word—couldn't, by Jove, for my jolly tongue was paralyzed. Didn't know what to do; didn't know what to say, you know, for there before my eyes, recognizable and unmistakable, despite frock coat and white choker tie, was the figure of "Foxy Grandpa."

The beefy face, white mutton chop whiskers and bald head were as indelibly imprinted on my memory as the sunburn line that fenced his fiery face.

XXIV

I DIDN'T go in to luncheon.

Instead, I lay down up in my room, wondering what Jenkins would think when he saw Foxy Grandpa a guest with me under this roof, and wondering also what I ought to do, or if I should do anything. I came to the conclusion finally that I wouldn't say anything for the present, for I had about all the complications I could carry.

Presently I went down to the living room, where they were all assembled, and my heart leaped as I thought I detected a brightening in Frances's face as I entered.

Billings was waving the frump away with his fat hand. "Take it away," he said. "I hate bugs."

"But, Jacky," said the frump pleadingly, "I think it's a *phusiotus gloriosa*."

"I don't care if it's a giraffe," said Billings rudely.

But the Professor was already across the room to the rescue.

"Ha! not a *gloriosa*," he said animatedly as he snooped over the little greenish thing in the frump's hand. "Observe the shortened *prothorax* and *mesothorax* and—"

"And *metathorax*," chimed in the frump, her head close to his. "Hence—"

"It is a *phanaeus carnifex*," said the Professor positively.

By Jove, it looked to me like what we used to call a dung beetle!

And then the two cranks went out in the sun with butterfly nets, and Frances and I drifted out to a pavilion overlooking the broad sweep of the Tappan Zee. But I was careful to avoid all reference to that night. Later we took a drive through Sleepy Hollow and the Pocantico Hills. But though we grew better and better acquainted every minute, I couldn't help feeling devilish disappointed, for never once did she ever call me "Dicky." I wondered moodily whether her brother had told her yet of his plans for me.

In the evening, the younger brother showed up at dinner, but sulked, which I thought was about the most considerate thing he could have done.

Once during the evening, Billings, who had been talking with the Professor, turned to me. "By the way, Dicky—those pajamas, you know—what did you do with them this morning?" He and the Professor whispered again; then Billings turned back. "Gray paper parcel—um—you know?"

Know? Dash it, of course I knew, but I—

"Why, I have them now," came quietly from my companion, "thanks to Mr. Lightnut. He gave them to me this morning."

"Gave them to you!" gasped Billings. He whispered to me: "But the rubies, you cuckoo—you didn't give her *those*?"

Rubies? Dash it, I had to think hard to remember what had become of the rubies. But I got the idea.

"Why, the Professor has those," I reminded him. "The red pajamas, you know—don't you remember?" I drew him aside.

Billings stared. "But he says he returned them," he exclaimed, cutting an odd sidewise look at the Professor, who was talking to Frances and the frump. Billings frowned.

"Haven't seen them," I said carelessly, for I wanted to talk to *her*. "Oh, dash the rubies—wait till morning!"

Billings looked sourly at the Professor and went off and sat alone. He

seemed put out about the old boy not returning the garments. Never seemed to occur to him that the Professor was a devilish busy and absent-minded old chap. Might not return them for a month. I knew that.

"Oh, really, Frances?" the frump was saying, "How exceedingly nice of you, dear!" The Professor was occupied for the moment with a moth. "I hope I won't frighten you in them as you say your maid was frightened at you. If pajamas are unbecoming to you, why just imagine me in them!"

By Jove, I was devilish glad I was not supposed to hear, for I didn't want to be required to imagine it. But as for them being unbecoming to my darling—well, I knew she knew what I thought!

Later when the evening had shaded off and the ladies had left us, we sat in the smoking room talking till late. I was astonished to find Foxy Grandpa devilish entertaining and clever—not a bad sort at all. He seemed to have no recollection of me at all, and therefore no grudges. I had made up my mind by this time I wasn't going to marry the frump, no matter what came or what Billings wanted, and I would tell him so in the morning. But whoever did marry her—and it looked like it was going to be the Professor—would have some sort of compensation in Foxy Grandpa's entertaining stories of Eastern scandal.

Billings's cub brother smoked in a corner of the room by himself and drank innumerable slugs of whiskey straight. Once I saw his father go over to him and seem to remonstrate, but without effect.

Billings wanted his father to try my special import of cigarettes, so I sent for Jenkins, who had arrived, to bring some down. And when he saw Foxy Grandpa calmly sitting there by me, pulling at a straw, he almost lost his balance. But I shook my head with covert warning.

"Ever see me before—eh?" asked the cub harshly, as he waved aside the cigarettes Jenkins extended. "Last Wednesday night—remember?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jenkins, staring. Then he rolled an eye at me and corrected himself hastily but firmly:

"No, sir; I don't recall ever seeing you before, sir."

Of course, I knew he had not, but the cub got up with a sour laugh. Then with a murmured gruff apology, he withdrew, saying he had a headache and was going to bed. And, by Jove, what a look he gave me from the door!

"Midnight!" ejaculated someone at length, just as the Professor finished a jolly rum but interesting yarn of adventures in Tibet. We all rose and I was answering a challenge of Billings's for a Sunday morning game of billiards, when all of a sudden a scream rang out from somewhere above. Then came a greater commotion—two voices raised in rapid and excited colloquy. On top of this another scream, louder and more piercing—a woman's call for help.

"One of the maids," Billings hazarded. "A mouse—"

"That was Frances!" I answered him excitedly, and we all piled out into the hall and peered down its long vista.

Down one of the dimly illuminated angles of the great stairway a white figure darted, then paused, abashed, crouching back against the wall at sight of us advancing. Above her sounded a man's voice, and even as she screamed again, he overtook her, clasping her arm.

"Frances—dear, dear Frances!" he cried. "Are you afraid of *me*?"

And he threw his arms around her. "Come on back, dearest!" he pleaded. "You have been dreaming."

And under the light of a great red cluster of grapes, pendent from the mouth of a grinning Bacchus, I recognized with horror the yellow mat of hair and freckled face of Billings's cub brother. On the instant, with a bull-like roar, Billings sprang forward, but I was quicker still. But fleeter than either of us to reach the scene were the two elderly men, together with Mrs. Warfield, the housekeeper, and a couple of the maids. Frances darted like a bird to Foxy Grandpa, and then the figures of the women shut her from view.

THE HAUNTED PAJAMAS

Billings and I had paused, halfway to the landing. It looked as though the elder Billings was amply capable of handling the occasion now. He had backed the youth against the wall behind, and his language was of a kind I hated to have my darling hear. Every time the other offered to expostulate, his father broke out again.

"You are a disgrace to an honored name!" he roared. "And the only explanation left for me to offer our guests is that you are drunk and don't know where you are!"

"Oh, father!" faltered the boy. And then he turned his black shrouded figure to the pale marble against which he leaned, and it seemed to me his very heart would sob away.

"What's the matter, dad?" came a voice from the head of the stairway. "What in thunder is all the row about?"

"By George!" gasped Billings. Everybody looked upward—one of the women screamed. For there, slowly advancing down the angle leading to the landing, his yellow mop of hair shining above the dark collar of a dressing robe, was the duplicate of the youth cowering, under the elder Billings's wrath.

And out of a dead, tense silence, came his voice again:

"Can't any of you speak?" He touched the figure on the shoulder. "Who are you?" he asked in an odd, strained voice.

The black figure turned toward him a face agonized in grief.

"I—I don't know," came a voice pitifully—his voice, it seemed.

The cub just stood like a statue for a moment—stood as we all stood. Then slowly his hand went out and touched the hand of his double. Slowly his fingers swept the face, the hair; gradually his eyes closed, as though he were sensing by touch alone.

Suddenly a loud cry leaped from his throat.

"Sister!" he shouted. And he swept the black figure to him.

Then, tossing back his head, the youth faced us with blazing, angry

eyes, looking as David must have, when he faced old what's-his-name.

"If there's a man among you, I'd like to know what this means?" he cried.

There was a blank silence for an instant, and then—

"Perhaps I can explain," said a voice.

And up the stairway advanced Professor Doozenberry.

XXV

EVENING had come again.

In fact, it was almost bedtime. Frances and I sat before the hearth in the library, looking silently into the red heart of the dying embers of fragrant pine cones. For in the heights of the Pocantico Hills it often is chilly on summer nights.

My darling sat on a low *fauteuil*, her chin resting upon her hand, her beautiful eyes fixed dreamily, inscrutably, upon the fading coals. In her lap lay the spread of the crimson pajamas.

She was thinking—thinking—I wondered what! And I was thinking how jolly rum it all was; that Francis wasn't Frances, that the Professor wasn't Billings, Colonel Francis Kirkland wasn't Foxy Grandpa and wasn't the frump's father after all; and that the frump, herself—bless her, her name was Elizabeth—wasn't Frances, and wasn't a frump at all, but just a jolly, nice, homely old dear, you know. And I was trying to catch and hold some of the deuced queer things the Professor had discoursed upon about ancient Oriental what's-its-name, and astral bodies, obsession, psychical research and all that sort of thing. Somehow, dash it, it had all seemed devilish unreasonable and improbable to me—couldn't get hold of it, you know; but as everybody else had said "Ah-h-h!" and had wagged their heads as though they understood, I just said: "Dash it, of course, you know!" and recrossed my legs and took a fresher grip on my monocle.

The most devilish hard thing to get

hold of had been that Frances had never sat on the arm of my Morris chair, had never told me she liked me better than any man she had ever met, and had never called me "Dicky" at any time or anywhere. I wondered if she ever would, and how the deuce fellows went about it when they proposed to the girl they madly loved. I was devilish put out, you know, that I had never tried it so I *could* know.

From across the hall droned the voices from the smoking room—Colonel Kirkland and the Judge debating something about treaty ports and the Manchurian railway. Through the French windows from the open loggia came the eager, pitched tones of the Professor and the frump—no, Elizabeth, I mean—discussing Aldeberan and Betelgeuse, dead suns, star clusters and the nebular hypothesis.

Within the room Billings had snapped out the lights, to bring out the blazing fire of his treasured ruby, and from the tray in the dark corner where he was closing it in his collection vault, it gleamed like the end of a bright cigar. The other four were absently clutched in my darling's hand and the crimson shine gleamed bravely through her finger bars. "Carbuncles—ancient carbuncles," the Professor had called them, "that the Chinese believed their dragons carried in their mouths, in their black caves in days of old, to furnish light whereby they could see to devour their victims." And *that* I believed, for I could see some practical sense about it!

"What *I* should like to know," said the dear, precious cub, hugging his knee by the mantel, "is where *I* come in!"

"You don't come in," said Billings, lifting him playfully by the ear; "you come *out*!" And out they went.

And my dear girl and I were like what's-his-name's picture—alone at last, you know. She stirred softly and her sigh came like the wind through the trees at night.

"I suppose we will have to burn them," she said dolefully; "the Professor says it is the only thing to do."

"Jolly shame, I say!" I murmured indignantly.

"It seems a crime," she said softly, and there was a little choke in her voice. She slipped to the soft-fibred rug before the fire. I gently brought my chair closer to her.

For a moment she pressed her cheek against the crimson mass, then kneeling forward, laid it gently on the glowing coals. There was a flash, a lightning blaze of red that almost blinded us, and then for a brief space a field of shining ash. Against this the tiny serpent frogs writhed and twisted and turned at last to leaden gray. Over the spread of all, swept wave after wave of golden, crimsoned pictures—temples and pagodas—dragons that licked fiery tongues at us—strange faces that came and went, leering hideously into our own.

And then of a sudden it was all faded—gone! The breeze from the open window stirred the ashes to the side. She dropped back with a deep sigh.

"They're gone," she breathed mournfully.

"Never mind," I said; "you've these left." And daringly I laid my hand upon the one that clasped the rubies. And I thrilled as it lay still beneath my own.

"Good-bye, you dear old, wicked, enchanted pajamas," she said. "I don't care—I just love you, because—" She paused.

"Because they brought us together?" By Jove, I didn't know I had said it, till it came out!

An instant, and then I caught it—just a little whisper, you know:

"Yes—Dicky!"

By Jove! And then, dash it, my monocle dropped! But I let it go.

Presently she looked at the glowing rubies in her hand.

"They are from India, you know, Dicky—from Mandalay, the Professor said." And she murmured: "On the road to Mandalay, where the old flotilla lay—don't you remember? I've been there, Dicky."

"By Jove!" I said. "Have you, though? Is it jolly?"

"The poet seemed to think so—" She laughed. "Do you know Kipling,

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Dicky?" I tried to think, but dashed if I could remember.

I wondered if it would be a good place to take a trip to!

I hitched closer. "What does—er—this poet chap say about it? What's it like, you know?"

She laughed. "I'm afraid it's wicked, Dicky, a good deal like the haunted pajamas." She leaned forward, chin upon her hand again, looking into the fading coals. "I'll tell you what he says."

Then her voice went on:

"Ship me somewhere east of Suez, where the best is like the worst,
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can raise a thirst."

"By Jove!" I said, interested.

"For the temple bells are callin', and it's there
that I would be—
By the old Moulmein pagoda, lookin' lazy at
the sea."

I brought my hand down on my knee.

"Oh, I say, you know—er—Frances," I exclaimed with enthusiasm, "we'll go there for our honeymoon, by Jove! Shall we—eh?"

And then the jolly rubies rolled unheeded to the floor. And nothing stirred but the ashes of the haunted pajamas!

And then— Oh, but Frances says that's all!



A LAST SERENADE TO THE MUSE

By ANITA FITCH

O LUTE of lutes,
Bear my despair
Unto my Lady
So cold and fair.

Tell her the moon
And stars must see
The deed she hath done
Thus wantonly.

O lute of lutes,
With deftest art
Tell of her bauble,
My broken heart.

Bid her adieu;
A last kiss fling.
And with the last message
Break, too, thy string.

O C T O B E R

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER

ON the altar of the world
All the hopes of Spring are furled,
All of Autumn's gifts are spread
Where the Summer rests her head.
Earth warm passions, fresh-lipped Youth,
Wraiths of Love and ghosts of Truth,
Broken dreams and visions lost—
All of these are heaped and tossed
On the sacrificial pile
Where in majesty the while
Summer sleeps in solemn state,
Sleeps upon a bed ornate
Strewn with boughs of pine and larch. . . .
Nature then applies the torch. . . .

II

First a spark—then leaps among
Oak and beech a tiny tongue,
Darts of gold and tips of yellow
Touch the branches of the willow,
And the growing color spreads
Into fierce and flaming reds,
Kindling bush and brake and briar
With the surging sacred fire.
Maple clusters all aglow,
Slim white birches in a row,
Trembling in the woodland ways,
Burst into a golden blaze.
Even slender grass and fern
Droop and wither as they burn,
While the clean green earth is lost
In this holy holocaust.
Now the wakened winds and free
Swing the brands from tree to tree,
And the fire spreads until
Every mountain side and hill,
Every vale and garden close
In the wildest radiance glows—
Till the flames that leap unfurled
Sweep and inundate the world
And the martyred Summer lies
Burning with her sacrifice.

III

Why this immolation—why
 Wrapped in flame does Summer lie
 Till the world is barren, and
 Only ashes strew the land?
 Is this saintly death the birth
 Of another, richer earth,
 That will quicken from the sere
 Leaves and ruins scattered here?
 Does the soul of Summer know
 That it perishes to show
 Man and Nature die in vain
 Being raised and born again—
 That from Summer's sacrifice
 Spring eternally will rise?



KNIGHT ERRANTRY

By W. EDSON SMITH

WHEN Chance, Romance and a brave free lance
 Kept all the Roads of Circumstance,
 Those were the days of gold,
 When a maiden sweet,
 With a dragon meet
 For chaperon, strange knights would greet
 Upon the lonesome wold.

Now, you know few of our stunts go through
 Just as we really want them to,
 And we're trembly around the knees.
 We nearly drop
 When a strolling cop
 In the park says: "Spoonng has got to stop,
 So beat it, if you please!"

Yes, at times, in rhymes, we sigh for the climes
 Where the wind brings the cadence of chapel chimes,
 For castles on countless hills,
 For a maid in distress,
 (That's the business!)
 These days all we do is to hook up a dress
 And settle some little bills.

AUTUMN ROSES

By EMERY POTTLE

EUPHEMIA CARROLL—she was always called “Phemie” affectionately—was barely twenty when she came to Italy for the first time, indeed, when for the first time she adventured more than a hundred miles from her modest New York village, and when for the first time she saw the sea. How it all amazingly happened does not greatly concern this present story. Suffice it that she undoubtedly set off amid tears and good wishes; her rector read prayers the following Sunday for those in peril on the deep, and the congregation shuddered fearfully at the thought of Phemie Carroll tossing on the billows. She came to visit her Uncle Stephen, her father’s wandering brother, whom she had not seen since she was a fat-cheeked, blond-curled little girl of seven.

She had always remembered him as the most adorable person in the world; adorable, for though she dutifully loved her father and mother and sister—because it did not occur to her not to—they never filled her with that glamour of romantic attachment which flooded her heart for wonderful Uncle Stevie. Their friendliness had subsequently grown through letters, hers weekly and prim, his desultory and delightful. Finally, one immemorial September evening her father brought her Stephen Carroll’s invitation, supplemented by an adequate sum of money, to spend a year with him in Italy. There was discussion enough and violent opposition, for to intrust a young girl to the care of a roving artist who had definitely given up his country and worshiped every sort of strange god—it was hinted horribly that he had even changed his

religion—was serious business. But the upshot was that Phemie went.

What they expected to find in each other, those two, it is difficult to say. Carroll’s impulse was kindly, for he was, perhaps, rather lonely and wanted really to know the little girl of the prim, sweet letters; Euphemia’s impulse was a bewildered worship of the unseen. What they actually found matters little. They were undoubtedly quite satisfied with each other. And their year was the most beautiful thing imaginable.

Stephen Carroll, in those idyllic months, was nearer fifty than forty, still with the remnants of the blond good looks which his small niece had so vividly remembered—a rare, gentle, humorous, inconsequent gentleman with scant regard for worldly—and his detractors added *religious*—proprieties, but with a passionate, simple devotion to all beauty wherever he found it. His knowledge of the art of beauty was great; his instinct was greater. He had suffered much and had rejoiced much, and his heart had remained boyish. So it was this man, with his careless dress, his sandaled feet, his overlong mane of chestnut hair, his bright, blue, twinkling eyes, who kissed pretty, frightened little Phemie Carroll at Naples and set forth with her on an immortal pilgrimage.

There was little of Italy they did not discover anew for themselves in that beautiful year. From ancient Italy to the *cinquecento*, and from the *cinquecento* to the then modern Italy—Carroll was an ardent patriot of the *resorgimento*; indeed, he had fought in several of its battles—they rambled humbly, joyously. Phemie was as delightfully

ignorant and as delightfully receptive as such a guide could wish. And he spared no pains with her. Her brain swam deliriously with the glories of an art she had not dreamed of; her mouth was childishly, eagerly full of a strange fantastic language; her heart bloomed like a rose garden. Slowly she realized that there was no restraint to her living, that she might speak and think and feel unashamed. He touched her with gentle, understanding, reverent hands, did Carroll, and the girl flowered as unconsciously, as sweetly as one of Luini's Madonnas. And so their beautiful year.

At the end of it Euphemia's sister became engaged to be married and there was need of her at home. She came sorrowfully back, but less sorrowfully, as it turned out, than she was to remain in the dreary little New York town. Her eyes were holden then from the long gray stretch of years before her. Silently she took up her share of the family burden. But it was a burden which was always to weigh her down more heavily. Presently her sister married and went away. The next year her father died, and she was left alone with a tiny income and a bad-tempered, complaining mother who fancied herself afflicted with most of the dire diseases of flesh and spirit, and was wont to rouse her daughter in the dead of night at least once every week to perform the deathbed rites.

There were plenty of the village swains who paid court to the slender, pretty, chestnut-haired Phemie in those days. People invariably called her "a nice girl" and praised her virtues. They said her trip to Italy had not spoiled her. It was something of a distinction for a young man to take her to a lecture or a church entertainment; she was the only person in the entire town who had "been to Europe." But for one reason or another she did not marry. Perhaps her mother was too bitter a pill for her admirers to swallow; perhaps she herself put them off. The men of Centreville did not compare favorably with her Uncle Stephen. And, too, she had spent a year in a land of love; she had been in love with love, and had felt its warm,

enchanting breath on her young cheek, its swift fire beating on her young heart. Her body and brain were in her native town, but the soul of her love was in another land.

Presently Phemie Carroll counted thirty years. Her thirtieth birthday was the saddest of her life, for on that day came the news of her uncle's death in Florence. Then forty. Then fifty. At last her dying mother died—without the satisfaction of a deathbed scene. They found her one afternoon in her chair lifeless; she had dozed off crossly, never to awaken.

Phemie Carroll let her house and kept two rooms for herself. She was an old woman, so she felt. She stared hard at herself in the mirror the day after her mother's funeral and saw a thin, worn face, pale and lined with a hundred tiny lines about the tired blue eyes; she saw her chestnut hair thinned and lusterless and muddy with gray; she saw her once charming figure gaunt and gloomy in its black gown.

"It is not I," she said quietly. "What is really I is in Italy with Uncle Stevie. I shall look no more than I can help, after this, in mirrors."

After all, thirty-five years of dull habit leave their dull traces. Phemie was right. It was not she in the mirror. She had changed.

She settled again to life. The activity that had gone into the care for her wretched old mother turned itself into care for her church and for her modest avocations. They made her president of the Centreville Literary Circle, and whenever their course of study wandered amiably toward Italy Phemie was called upon to "read a paper." In all the years she had not suffered her knowledge of Italian to lapse, but, "because Uncle Stevie would like it," she had read aloud for an hour every possible night of her life in her room some Italian book. Now that she was free again she began to study afresh. She got old Giovanni, the village peanut vender, to visit her twice a week and converse in his native tongue. She faithfully read Grant Allen and every other book on Italy and Italian art that she could acquire.

Poor Phemie! She had indeed changed. Try as she might, she knew sadly she could no longer be a girl in Italy, as she could no longer be a girl in her mirror. There was only one dream left, to see once more before she died the land which was afar off.

II

WHATEVER were her defects—she was not without them—Jane Fountain was kind. To convey precisely a notion of her nature her friends had invariably to resort to an invidious colloquialism: she had a good heart. For her own part, she was generally believed to consider herself a virtuous reincarnation of Helen of Troy. Her beauty was, to her, at least, “as those Nicean barks of yore.” And since she was so naïvely good to herself, she could not resist being good to others. If her motives were more or less self-flattering, the results, at any rate, were none the less considerable. For reasons entirely of a social nature she had, on the death of her husband, Samuel Fountain, removed her *ménage* from Brooklyn to Paris. Even her handsome fortune could not efface the damning truth that Fountain had largely acquired his wealth from a series of “five-and-ten-cent stores” which he had established throughout America. In Paris she at once became euphoniously Jeanne La Fontaine; she had an apartment on the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne; she dressed extravagantly well and youthfully; she entertained feverishly in the “American Colony,” and also included certain willing French in her hospitalities.

Madame Fountain was, in some way or other, a first cousin once removed of Euphemia Carroll, but so distant and vague was the removal that the two knew little of each other. Their intercourse was yearly based on the former’s invariable Christmas gift and the latter’s letter of thanks. Indeed, Euphemia had not seen her relative for twenty years. The recurring rite of the present had ceased to interest her; she took the handkerchiefs and gloves

mechanically and wrote her mechanical thanks. In the immediate days after her mother’s death she sent the news of her bereavement to her cousin, and received an effusive letter of condolence and the assurance that when next Madame Fountain came to America she would infallibly pay her a visit.

It was three years later when Jane Fountain came over, impelled by affairs of business. And as she loyally never played the snob with her own kind, she apprised Euphemia of her arrival, and some time later descended on the Centreville hotel with twenty trunks, a man servant and a maid. She stayed a week—an unforgettable week for Centreville. The traditions of her still linger there. She frantically upset the hotel with her exigencies and the town with her manners and her clothes. The rector himself came privately to ask the proprietor of the Globe Hotel if it was really true that Mrs. Fountain smoked cigarettes in the dining room. “Parson, she did. I seen her with my own eyes. Little fancy gold-tipped ones in a gold holder, by gee!” replied that gentleman with gloating horror. “And she came down one night with no top to her waist. My wife thinks it’s awful.”

Phemie Carroll’s own state of mind was likewise unsettled. The advent of Cousin Jane trailing clouds of glory discomposed her. She had grown so securely into her modest gray life with only her Dream for color and hope that this event was all out of proportion with her placid scheme. She did not comprehend it. She could not decide whether she was pleased or infinitely embarrassed. Jane’s patronage, her unthoughtful kindnesses, bewildered her. She felt old and dowdy—though she was younger by a half-dozen years than her cousin. The pain and pity of her lost girlhood—all embalmed in the frankincense and myrrh of that perfect marble tomb—smote her bitterly. Often after the day with Jane she would come back to her rooms to find them meanly small and unlovely; and she would weep. But, on the other hand, there was a certain excitement in it all.

Jane had come to see her. She had

come from *Europe*. There was a tingling satisfaction in hearing Europe spoken of as if it were the next village to Centreville. And if Euphemia did not know Paris, at any rate she knew Italy and was not ashamed. The satisfaction in hearing was not much less than the satisfaction of realizing that Jane was now really an European product. The rows of bottles and pots of creams and ointments and cosmetics and skin tonics on Jane's dressing table, her massages, her treatments, her tight stays, the whole elaborate paraphernalia *de beauté*, thrilled her as much as reading the life of Catherine Sforza, for instance. She did not mind her cigarettes—for she had smoked once with Uncle Stephen, though she'd never confessed it. She condoned and excused what seemed occasionally Jane's componnisses.

At the end of the week, Jane Fountain, whose affairs had gone well in America, and who had taken a good-humored liking to her simple-hearted cousin, abruptly said: "Phemie, why don't you come back with me? I'm going to Italy—to Lake Como—for the autumn. You say you'd rather go to Italy than eat. I must say you don't eat enough to keep a bird alive! Why not come along with me?"

Euphemia flushed. "Jane, my dear, I have not the money. It is all I can do to keep my head above water as it is. The expenses, even for me, are so great. And this year the Missionary Society—"

"Oh, damn the Missionary Society, my dear! I'm asking you to go with *me*, as my guest. It won't cost you a sou, and you can come home when you like—or spend the winter with me in Paris. I've got to go soon. This town is too exciting for me. I want to get where they play bridge. Now, will you go, or won't you?"

"But, Jane, I—I—such kindness—I—" The tears rose to Euphemia's eyes piteously.

"No 'but—Jane—I' and so forth. Will you come? I'd really like it."

"But I've no clothes—no—"

"Oh, fiddlesticks! My maid will fix you

something. I've got plenty of clothes you're welcome to. Hélène can do them over for you wonderfully. There's that white *crêpe* and a gray thing and—Well, will you do it?" Madame Fountain lighted a cigarette, gazing complacently at the fat ringed fingers which held the match. "Will you?"

Euphemia held her breath. The blood rushed hotly through her veins. To see Italy again—Italy! To find again the heart which was lost to her all these years! The very thought left her weak and trembling. "May I—I—answer tomorrow, Jane?" she stammered.

Madame Fountain laughed out of affectionate pity. "Anybody would think I'd asked you to go in a balloon to the North Pole. Certainly, wait until tomorrow. The next day I go, you know."

Euphemia Carroll fairly reeled home. She sat for hours that night at her open window, staring out into the moonlit garden faintly white with blossoms and gloomed over with the shadows of the lonesome evergreens. But it was not her garden in Centreville she saw. It was the garden of her Uncle Stephen's villa on the hills above Florence; and she was twenty, and outside the gate a young peasant was singing love songs to his sweetheart.

III

ALL through the night Euphemia lay awake in the long journey from Paris to Italy. She felt no discomforts; whether the thick air of her compartment was hot or whether it was cold she scarcely knew; whether she slept or waked she scarcely knew. The heavy, dusty train pounding unemotionally on the senseless rails became to her a creature of exquisite sympathy, jolting out hearteningly for her "It-a-ly—It-a-ly—It-a-ly." As they roared into the recurring great black, empty caves of stations, the greater and blacker and emptier for the knots of feeble, hurrying lights, she would smile happily. Not even the strange old-new names thrilled her. She blessed each

fresh halt, to be sure, because it meant another milepost toward her heart's desire, but for themselves they stirred scant interest. Presently they left France and were in Switzerland. Uncle Stevie had detested Switzerland, she so well remembered. Raising the curtain of her window, Euphemia gazed vaguely out into the vast, alien, chill beauty. There was a moon which sailed high over the illimitable mountains—huge shadows piled on shadows. She watched the unreal panorama with her eyes, but her spirit had fled on before.

Yes, she was here in the Gotthard express. Four days ago she had first set foot on French soil in the morning and that night had seen Paris. A week before that she had sailed away from New York in such a vessel as struck her dumb with amazement, for she had unconsciously continued to associate crossing the Atlantic with the vile-odored, comfortless craft of thirty-five years ago. And before all that she had said dazed good-byes to her friends in Centreville. She wondered if the young rector—who himself had once gone abroad for six weeks—had been kind enough to say prayers for her. What a difference in the two journeys! Then there had been weeks of preparation, sleepless nights of nervous anticipation, fear and delight for the unknown; now Jane had dragged her off on two days' notice, and no one had been at the steamer to wave her adieu. How many dead there were in her life! Father, mother, Uncle Stevie, poor dear Uncle Stevie—perhaps that girl of twenty, she herself, was dead! No, she was waiting in Italy for her to come, waiting with outstretched hands full of love, the love denied her barren life these five and thirty years. Dear, dear, she'd forgotten to ask the Purdys to look out for her cat. Would they feed it? Carlo was very particular about his milk. Nannie Price was so stupid about figures, she probably would never understand the accounts for the Missionary Society all set down so carefully in the little red book. Perhaps she ought not to have come away so hurriedly. Did the neighbors think she'd done wrong in coming with Jane? She

knew the rector disapproved of Jane. Jane was so kind, so generous; if only she were not quite so—so—well, it did not matter. Everyone has his own peculiarities.

There would be autumn roses in Italy and heliotrope and *olea fragans*. The olive trees would glisten gray-green on the sunny slopes. The chestnuts would be coming on—it was the first of September. She remembered the Lago di Como so vividly. It was the loveliest place in the world, she had thought. Cadenabbia? She did not recall Cadenabbia; she and Uncle Stevie had stayed at Gravedona in a tiny Italian *trattoria con alloggio*. In the morning she must look it all up in her journal. What a comfort that journal had been! Even in her saddest days she had only to read it over, and with the wings of the morning she was again across the sea. Jane had said Cadenabbia was a handful of houses. They would stay at some simple hotel and she would talk to the proprietor and his wife about their affairs. How nice it was that Jane loved Italy, too—she went there every year. Of course she supposed Italy must have changed a good deal in thirty-five years, but, after all, Italy was Italy. It would be so restful to be in a nice little village. She would read Dante again, she decided, and walk in the mountains and make friends with the dear peasants. And at evening there would be the beautiful perfumed silence and the vesper bells—and then sleep. The bells at Gravedona and the answering bells across the serene wet distances had been wonderful, she recalled. The echo of them in her heart seemed the very voice of the Madonna herself. And the cypresses, straight, darkly green, mysterious against the blue sky. The tears filled her eyes.

At Basle Jane's maid brought Euphemia hot coffee and bread. She dressed and joined Jane in her compartment. Though her companion talked garrulously behind her thick veils—for she had not had opportunity to prepare her complexion—Phemie remained almost mute, her eyes riveted on the window. As they fled on down

through the superb soulless glory of the Alps, she felt her heart beat convulsively, her body tremble. She clenched her hands to keep them still.

"You're so quiet, Phemie," said Jane, waking from a doze. "Don't you feel well? This is a killing journey. I wish we'd decided to break it at Lucerne. I don't much wonder you're dead."

Phemie turned her lovelit eyes for an instant to her cousin. "I'm not dead. I've been so for nearly forty years. I'm just getting alive."

Jane smiled complacently, not understanding. "I don't know how you stood that little hole you live in. I must say the trip has done you good. You look quite young and flirtatious. Your cheeks are sort of pink, and your eyes shine like a girl's. There's always an old widower or two at Cadenabbia—maybe you'll catch one, Phemie. That gray dress looks awfully well on you—Hélène is so clever, isn't she? And the coiffeur certainly did wonders to your hair in Paris."

Euphemia blushed delightfully. "Dear Jane, I'm so happy. I'm scared. You'll make me a vain old thing. Jane, dear, how good, good, *good* you are!"

"*Tiens, ma chère! Que voulez-vous?* Don't be silly. I'm glad you're here and happy." And Jane dozed off again in the placid consciousness of her bounty which cost her so little effort.

On and on through the bright iridescence of Switzerland, cold blue-green, blue-white, blue-gray, brilliant, sunlit. Gradually the landscape softened into tenderer tones. Phemie Carroll felt it, as one feels a warm air on one's cheek. Italy was nearer, nearer. At last the frontier! There was a *doganière* in his ugly uniform strutting on the platform outside like a proud rooster. The railway officials were speaking Italian. Instead of *gasthof* she read, almost with a cry, *trattoria* on the inns. She had come. She strained her eyes to see, pressing close against the window. In another instant she fancied she might catch a glimpse of herself, of that slender, pretty blue-eyed girl in the old-fashioned dress of forty years ago. Just beneath her a young soldier was kissing good-bye to a

slim, fair-haired Italian girl. They stood mute, their hands tightly clasped, their lips meeting with sorrowful eagerness. Phemie smiled mistily at the immortal emotion. She had a sense of sharing the honest boy's kisses.

There was an hour's waiting at Como before their boat started. Euphemia would not have minded ten hours' waiting. She was alive; her feet were on the ground; she spoke; she saw. Yet, for all that, she was in a ridiculous, enchanting dream. It timidly occurred to her that so one might feel on the morning after the Resurrection. She and Jane sat in the *piazza* of Como before the boat landing, where the sun beat glaringly on the gray-white stones. Outside a little restaurant under a dun-colored awning they had their tea and paid for it with Italian money, getting back change in the form of big copper *soldi*. Phemie could not talk, she was too afraid of tears. Jane was tired and cross and grumbled at the heat and the smells. Presently Phemie crept away alone to the Cathedral. How clearly she remembered the day she saw it first with Uncle Stevie! It had been just such a day as this—a day of full mature September heat. She stared reminiscently at the lovely façade which he had carefully explained to her. Poor dear Uncle Stevie, dead, asleep near Shelley under the cypresses of the Protestant cemetery in Rome. Suddenly she felt terribly alone. It was as if cold gray clouds had all at once obscured the sun. Uncle Stevie dead! She had not realized what returning to Italy would be without him. The futility of finding him only accentuated the futility of finding herself. Bitterly conscious of being an old faded woman, she entered the *Duomo* and sat in a shadowed corner—alone.

Yet Euphemia Carroll forgot utterly those moments in the Cathedral, when once they had begun the brief voyage from Como to Cadenabbia. There in the sunset, frail daffodils, pale roses, the gentle mountains wet with amethystine dyes which flowed like God's dearest wine into the sapphire cup of the lake, staining the water to a new miracle of Cana; there in the sunset serene on the

tiny villages resting like contented children in the curve of strong green arms, guarded by tragic sentinel cypresses; there in the sunset, in a glamoured peace so deep, so secret, so *her own*, she came back to Italy, her tired body her tired spirit, herself.

"It's really sweet, isn't it, Phemie?" commented Jane. "See the colors."

IV

EUPHEMIA had been in Italy—more precisely, she had been on the Lake of Como at Cadenabbia—a fortnight. On a morning that marked the beginning of the fifteenth day she sat in the pleasant tree-shaded garden which stretched up toward the mountains behind her hotel, sat in the garden and wept. Though Euphemia's tears seem often to have recurred in this story, she was not naturally a weeping woman. But on this particular morning there was no resisting that inner salt sea beating against the dykes. She wept because it did not occur to her to curse, and so found a slight relief, at least, in her most vehement show of protest.

A young man who had been walking early in the mountains—he was in jacket and knickerbockers of white linen and wore heavy brown shoes and gaiters—entered quietly at the upper gate of the garden and strolled aimlessly down the path. He himself seemed none too pleased with his condition, despite the enchantments of the fresh divine day. His dark, beautifully cut face was gloomily overshadowed. His hands and eyes betrayed great irritation of spirit. Occasionally his lips parted viciously in a manner suggestive of swearing; he was scarcely the person one associates with tears. His restless glances caught the figure of the weeping lady sitting stiffly in a rigid little iron chair beside a stone table. He paused in curiosity, screening himself behind a tree trunk, and watched the incongruous sight. In the meek, helpless passion before him he unconsciously began to lose the sense of his own discomfort. His curiosity changed into pity. '*Dio mio,*' he murmured; '*come piange, povera donna!*'

He continued to stand uncertainly behind the tree, unwilling to proceed lest he intrude embarrassingly on her sorrow. And Phemie Carroll continued to weep. His eyes took in completely—for he was experienced in the study of the female—the slender graceful old figure in the simple summer gown and the wide-brimmed hat tied old-fashionedly under her chin with lavender ribbons. He liked that white straw hat with its nodding lilacs and the white gown with knots of lilac flowers and touches of lilac at the waist and throat. She was undoubtedly American, but of another sort than he was accustomed to see. She seemed somehow—well, simpler, sweeter. He fancied she might have been a pretty little *donnina* years ago. Even now she had a faded feminine something, a charm, that attracted him. He preferred in all cases blond women. The thought of blond women disturbed him; he frowned and for the instant retreated into his own unhappiness. Presently he smiled; the notion of himself behind a tree in a temper staring at an unknown woman in distress struck him humorously. He wondered vaguely what the devil she kept on crying for. He hated to see women cry like that. As there was nothing for him to do, he decided that he would best regain the gate and descend by another path.

At that instant a red-cheeked, round-eyed, dirty little girl entered the garden. Strangers? Her beady eyes shone. She bobbed her head. "*Accetti una poesia!*" she cried in a piercing tone, and without waiting to hear whether her poesy was acceptable or not, she rattled out in a loud soulless monotone some rudimentary Italian verses about the birds and flowers and the Virgin Mary. At the triumphant close she dropped her voice to a whine. "*Un soldo, un soldo!*"

At the first sound of this mouthpiece of the muse, Euphemia had sat up suddenly and dried her eyes. As she did so she caught a glimpse of the young man. She blushed hotly in a tumult of chagrin and turned away to hide her ravaged face. But her interest in the purveyor of poetry caused her to look again. Her eyes met the young man's.

He was smiling at the absurd little chanting creature—or was it at her? In spite of herself Euphemia smiled sympathetically back.

“*Un soldo, un soldo!*” reiterated the brazen child, who knew the effect of “local color” on the visitors.

The man tossed her a copper and a careless word. She ran to Euphemia greedily. “I’m sorry. I have no money with me,” the latter regretfully explained, with an apologetic look toward her companion.

“Go away; don’t annoy the lady,” he commanded sharply. The child slunk off crossly.

“She is amusing, but she is also annoying. They expect too much of the strangers here,” said he, lifting his cap to Euphemia. He spoke in excellent, precise English.

She nodded pleasantly. “I don’t mind. But I have brought no money out with me this morning.”

“She has enough from me. It is no matter. I must laugh to see her so funny, so—so—I have forgotten my word in English. I am not so practised in it these days.”

“You speak it very well,” Euphemia replied. It seemed necessary to reply, for he continued to linger near her, as if he wished to talk. He was very handsome, she thought, so slim and clean cut and dark. He suggested to her, outwardly, a beautiful little black bull her father had once owned, a superb, finely fashioned animal of steel and satin, with gentle eyes. “You speak very well, indeed.”

“Thank you, but I am afraid you are too kind. You speak Italian, too. I heard you speak to the little girl. You English are so quick to learn our language. You make shame to us.”

“I am American,” said Euphemia, smiling frankly, “and you, too, are making compliments, *complimenti Italiani*.”

“No, no, I promise you.”

“I love your language so much. It is so beautiful. I love to hear it, for it reminds me of the happiest days in my life.”

“That is a most beautiful thing to say of our language. It should be greatly

honored to remind a charming lady of her happiest days—for the happiest days are the days of first love.”

Euphemia colored, in spite of her age, at the flattering eyes before her. The young man standing there in the sunlight, so gallant, so good-looking, so confident, suddenly seemed to her the embodiment of her imagined lover in the land of love and flowering youth—long ago. The Prince come to wake a Princess once asleep, now dead. Her mouth quivered with pain at the remembrance of all she had lost.

“You like Italy, then?” he asked gently.

“I love Italy—the Italy that I knew.”

“And so you do not love this Italy? Or do not know it?” he questioned interestedly. “I do not understand.”

“To me, this”—she waved her hand toward the hotels below—“is not my Italy. I had expected—well, no matter what. You see, I am an old woman,” she went on simply, “and as one gets older one lives more in what has gone before. At least I do. I came to Italy when I was twenty—nearly forty years ago—to visit my uncle, a wonderful, delightful man, who made me see and love Italy as he did. Now I have come back again for the first time since, and—” She hesitated.

“I know. I know,” he broke in quickly. “I am sorry, so sorry. And you knew Italy before I did? How strange that is! I have heard my mother say to me much of Italy then. It was different then.”

“I do not know. But I was different. I was young and—”

“Beautiful.”

She smiled indulgently. “I was said to be a pretty girl, but there was much more than that. I had never been out of my country before. And so to come like that, young and irresponsible, into so much beauty—you see it made a wonderful impression on me. It was very simple in those days—and my uncle was a man to seek simplicity rather than pretentiousness. Now I find it—changed.”

He nodded. “Ah, I am sure! And you stayed in Italy—”

"A year. We went all over it—into all the little towns and big—like two children. We lived with the people. And then it was necessary for me to go home and—well, one cannot be sure of much in this world, can one? I was to have come back soon, but I never did." Euphemia paused dreamily to wander through the bygone years. "Now I am here again."

"You are not pleased?" he questioned, and somehow she did not resent his questions. It seemed only natural to be talking to him.

"If I had not had the other, I should feel differently, I think. But having had that"—a little gust of passion swept her voice—"this is intolerable. I hate it. I do not understand it. It is not my world, this big expensive hotel. It—it frightens me. I want my own Italy back. Forgive me for telling you all this. I did not realize that—"

"Please," he interrupted, sitting down beside her, "please speak to me. I think I understand quite well. It is not Italy at all. It is not anything at all. You are quite right to be cross about it. Cadenabbia—forgive me—is made for you Americans who like to spend so great sums of money. But they do so like it," he finished with a laugh. "You know they have not had your Italy."

"I know. That is why I feel so ungrateful. My cousin brought me here with her. She is so kind, so very generous. And she loves it. I know I am foolish to care. But it all seems so artificial. There aren't even any *Italians*. And I have to wear my best clothes all day and my hat at dinner and *gloves*, always gloves. I get so tired dressing up. I can't play bridge, and in the evening I have to sit for hours watching them play. It seems to me I'll scream sometimes. And the boatmen aren't real boatmen, and the men who come to serenade aren't real serenaders. I don't know how I can stand it. You think me foolish and silly, I know. I am. I'm a ridiculous old woman."

"And so you came into the garden this morning and wept," he said softly, his voice sunk to a tenderness few women ever cared to resist.

"Yes, I just had to. I had to be alone. They're all going to the Villa Serbaloni for luncheon, Cousin Jane and her friends, and I've got to go, too. They're going to take the *cards* along, so they can play bridge all the afternoon in that lovely garden." Her voice betrayed her scorn. "And they'll talk about their *cures* they've made in Germany—one woman here says she eats ten lemons every day—and their clothes, and every little while say the view is lovely, and abuse the servants, and come home satisfied. Oh, I wish I had not come! It was a mistake, a mistake!"

"Poor little lady!" he murmured. "*Poverina*, I am so very sorry." He gazed at her affectionately as if she were a child, understanding vaguely what she had lost out of life, what the starved years had been to her, and how sad her disillusion was this September morning to find herself old and alien. "It was beautiful, I think," he continued, dropping unconsciously into Italian, "those days. When one is young and loves, the whole world is a lovely garden and Italy the loveliest of all. I should like to have seen it then. How much greater your experience has been than mine! I envy you. The tourists had not come then, all the mad swarming lot of them. We were still Italians and we kept our simpler ideals clear. *Peccato* that the world moves so fast. Perhaps it grows worse, too." His eyes glowed with feeling.

"So my uncle used to say."

"I have felt always very sympathetic toward you Americans," he veered abruptly, "in spite of your tourists. My mother's greatest love, and her first one, was an American. He was much older than she. It was long, long ago. She has told me about it after my father died. It was such a romantic story. And now in a box I have his letters to her, in Italian, wonderful, passionate letters of love, and like an Italian's letters. He knew the language well—and loved well. They never met but once. It is strange, isn't it, how love comes! And he wrote to her and gave the letters to her maid. Then she was married. They never met again."

Euphemia was staring at him with startled shining eyes; a bright spot of pink burned on each cheek. "His name, could you tell his name? Could I ask?"

"Stephano—Stephano Carroll. Why?"

"He was my uncle, my dear, dear Uncle Stephen! I came to Italy to see him. And it was your mother he loved? Your mother? He told me that very story long ago—one September night at Gravedona—and now he is dead and lies alone in Rome, and—"

"My mother is dead also."

They sat silent in the quiet morning garden, each weaving anew the threads of the ancient golden romance and marveling that their fingers should touch in common the frail, beautiful fabric.

Euphemia raised her eyes to her companion. His own were on her with soft melancholy. They were eyes which never wandered from any woman with whom he chanced to be. | And so he was the son of the girl her uncle had loved? He might have been *her* son. A rush of envy overwhelmed her, envy for the women who had loved and had been loved, women who had borne sons like this. To have gone through life barren of body and heart! To have stood once—for a little year—on the threshold of the dream, to have looked with all her young hope down the long green flowering *allées* of spring where waited—*someone*, and then to have turned away to autumn. Autumn it was, always autumn with her. Only one day of spring in life and twenty thousand days of autumn. A tumult of rebellion swept over her, rebellion against age and suffering.

"How strange it is," said he, "after all these years to meet you—you who were almost the daughter, I think, of the man who loved my mother!"

"You who are her son."

"There is nothing to life except love—and sorrow."

"No—nothing."

He smiled again. "I, too, am unhappy this morning. We are very sympathetic to each other, isn't it true?"

"But you are young and I am old. Unhappiness is worse for the old, though I think it seems harder for the young."

"You are young—in heart. I know it." She did not reply.

"What shall you do here?" he asked after a long silence.

"I am going back—back to America where I belong. I am going to ask my cousin to let me go at once." Euphemia spoke convulsively.

"I understand."

She seemed to forget that this young man was an utter stranger to her. "If I could have had one day—just one day—of Italy, *my* Italy, I could go in peace," she sighed. "It isn't much to ask."

The young man thought of another woman, slim and blond, lovely and twenty, who had said to him only last night: "I will have every day a beautiful day. If you can't give this, you'd better go."

"Let us run away today," he said abruptly. His voice was gaily persuasive. "Run away from everyone we know and make ourselves a *festa*. You shall leave your stupid cousin and her friends and the diseases and the bridge and the white gloves and Paris hats. You shall come with me and we shall be happy for a whole day. I know a little inn with a garden—it is at Gravedona. We shall eat our luncheon there and talk of love and Italy, the real Italy, and be—just *contadini* together. Will you come?"

Gravedona! On the instant Phemie's years fell from her like the dull brown domino from Colombine. Her eyes were sparkling young. Her limbs were fresh and untired and lithe. A bird sang in her heart. There were roses on her cheeks. She did not even hesitate, demur, confuse herself over foolish details.

"If you wish it, I will come," she laughed. "Only, we must run away. The others must not see us."

"We'll be as mysterious as two lovers. My boat is waiting down there. I'll arrange it all. Now, listen, it shall be like this—"

V

TWILIGHT—a sunset of frail daffodils and pale roses. Phemie and the young Italian walked slowly along a narrow path that wound like a soft gray ribbon

through the mountains. Above them, below them, stretched the vineyards, mellow, mature, rich with empurpled fruit, which shone darkly against the warm green of the grassy slopes. Here and there cypresses slender and dark shot up against the sky like painted things, so grave and motionless were they. The late sun quivered over the silvery groves of olives. Near and far and farther little villages, in delicate old faded tones of gray and blue and green and yellow and white—dreams of color rather than color itself—rested like contented children in strong arms. Sweet bells out of tune rang piously and other sweeter, distant bells answered. Far down, the lake lay glistening, a sheen of light, an isle of water amid splendid lands. The remoter mountains were wet with amethystine dyes which flowed like God's dearest wine into the sapphire cup, staining the water to a new miracle of Cana—the mysterious crimson sacrament poured out afresh for love's sake. The remoter mountains—the jeweled walls of a holy city. Beyond and above all one solitary peak was flushed with a tender rose pink. For an instant Phemie faintly comprehended what the peace which passeth understanding signified.

They paused to look about them. The gentle perfumed airs of evening touched their cheeks. "Italy!" murmured Phemie, and her companion was astonished, as he looked at her. She gave him the illusion of a young girl, standing there in the half-light, with parted lips, enraptured eyes. "Italy!"

"*E l'amore*," he added. "Look—Bel-lagio is a little city of love lying there in the sunset, blushing like a young girl."

She smiled up at him and put out her hand. "I have had my day. I am content to go back. You have given an old woman her youth again—for a day. Ah, I thank you, I thank you! You will always remember there is an old lady so thankful to you, won't you? As long as she lives, she will never forget—nor after."

"Those who are born for love never grow old," he answered gently. "I shall remember." He still held her hand. Yielding to an impulse, he bent and

kissed her on the lips, as a son might kiss a mother. The tears welled piteously to her eyes.

They walked on in silence. Once the young man reached up to a wall and picked a hanging spray of autumn roses, pink, which he put into her hand. Phemie smiled and said nothing. Even after they had reached their boat, she did not again speak. Nor did he. At the last her "good-bye" was so low he scarcely heard it.

VI

"EUPHEMIA CARROLL, where on earth have you been? I've nearly lost my mind over you. I'm worried to death," Jane Fountain burst out, as her cousin came up the landing steps at Cadenabbia. "I've had people searching for you. What have you been doing?"

Phemie smiled vaguely. "I've been—away for forty years, Jane dear."

"You're losing your mind. That boat—how did you come to be in it? Do you know the Marchese San Antonio?"

"Whom, dear?"

"Whom? The woman's mad! Don't you know whose boat you've been in? Don't you know who that young man is in it?"

"No, Jane; I didn't ask."

"Great heavens! How did you get there? Pray tell me that!"

"He asked me to come," murmured Phemie.

"Asked you! Phemie Carroll, if you are not raving crazy, will you be good enough to explain how it is that you are sailing about the lake with the only son of one of the oldest families in Italy—and, if all they say is true, one of the wildest?"

"Forgive me, Jane. I—I can't explain just now. Later, if you don't mind. I—I—think I'll go up to my room now."

The slender old figure turned absently away. Her face was serene, peaceful, like the oncoming evening. In her hands was a spray of late pink roses.

"How odd she seems! So—so changed," thought Jane, half resentfully.

FRENCH PHRASES FOR FICTION READERS

By STUART B. STONE

A *BAS*—A phrase signifying “get the hook” or “to hell with.” Employed zestfully and eternally by the French in the course of strikes, riots and political campaigns. Much overworked during the Reign of Terror. E.g. “*À bas, you scab!*”

VIVE—The Gallic hurrah, equivalent to the American phrase, “Oh, you!” A Parisian will “*vive*” the army, the candidate for constable, the hero in the sawmill-rescue scene, the prize baby at the county fair and the bartender, on the slightest provocation.

OUI—Yes, yes! “*Oui*” is invariably repeated two or three times, as a Frenchman would not expect to be believed if he uttered the affirmative no more than once.

MON CHER—A term of endearment employed by the Parisian as a prelude to making a touch or kissing upon the cheek. E.g. “*Mon cher Adolphe, lend me five francs.*”

CANAILLE—The great, common push—the lambs—the gang that hangs around the post office waiting for Congressional garden seed.

ON DIT—“It is said.” The prelude to the screamer told at the round table in front of the café.

GARÇON—The pompadoured bandit who brings the vintage that starts the “*on dit.*” Born with his hand behind his back. Emigrates to America via Queenstown.



A WISH

By JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

MY very soul I'd give
To write a line to live
Forever and for aye,
For in that single line
This bartered soul of mine
Would dwell, and dwelling there, would live alway.

ZERO TROIS

By MARGERY JACKSON

“FAITES votre jeu, messieurs! Faites votre jeu! Le jeu est fait; rien ne va plus.” The tired voice of the *croupier* rang out above the noise of the coming and going of many people; his eyes roamed wearily around the table, which, at this hour of the *déjeuner*, was beginning to attract fewer crowds, while his fingers mechanically set the little ball rolling in the swiftly revolving wheel. It was the quietest hour of the day, this hour of luncheon.

A woman, obviously English, to judge by her fresh complexion and beautiful red-gold hair, slipped into a vacant seat several places to the right of the *croupier*, and laid a gold chain purse upon the table in front of her. She turned to say something with a light laugh to a man who stood beside her. He looked like a soldier, and was also obviously British. He leaned over her chair from the back with a proprietary air and appeared to be directing her play, for she consulted him every time she placed her money on a number. The *croupier* watched them for a few moments with bored interest. He knew them well by sight. This was the fourth day they had come to his table at this hour. Sometimes later in the day he caught sight of them among the crowds that came and went unceasingly all day. They were always together; usually there was another man, who sat at the other side of the table, to whom they threw laughing remarks and applause whenever he won—to the annoyance of other players. Today was the first time they were alone.

Mrs. Midwood was a pretty woman who spent a great deal of time and money on her clothes. There was a brilliant hardness about her that was repel-

lent, and suggested a beautiful bright diamond. She was evidently “well off,” to judge by the reckless way she scattered louis and gold *plaques* on the table—sometimes winning considerable sums, sometimes losing—never satisfied.

“I have had rotten luck today,” she exclaimed petulantly to her companion as she lost for the third time running on the last six numbers. “Bobbie has taken all mine away with him.”

“You don’t risk enough to win, and you should never go against the table,” Major Maxwell replied, tossing a coin on his own account onto Number Three. “Why don’t you choose a number and stick to it till it turns up—at the same time protecting yourself by having a little on something else? Your luck will turn sooner or later, if you only have the courage to wait.”

“And in the meantime lose all my money! Thanks—there, now; I have won a trifle, a couple of louis, on the silly *manque*. I shall try once more on Number Five, and if I lose, I shall be bound to go home, because I shan’t have any more money, and you won’t lend me a franc—you brute!”

“Not I. There would be no stopping you till you had ruined us both. What is your fancy this time?”

“Number Five. That is my little boy’s age. It ought to bring me luck,” and she threw the two louis she had just won onto the table in the direction of the selected number as the *croupier* began his familiar cry: “*Faites votre jeu, messieurs!*”

The little gold coins fell short, and rolling round a couple of turns, stopped at last on the first three numbers.

“*Le jeu est fait; rien ne va plus,*” said

the *croupier* just as Major Maxwell leaned forward to push them onto the right square.

Mrs. Midwood seized his arm.

"It is too late," she whispered. "Leave them and see what happens."

The little ball started rolling and whirled round and round the circle, with the eyes of everyone present fixed upon it. It began to slow down, hovered a second over Number Five, hesitated, and finally tumbled into Number One.

Mrs. Midwood drew a deep breath.

"I have won, have I not? On *Zero Trois!* What a blessing you did not move them! And what about you? Have you won, too? Capital! *Merci, monsieur,*" turning to smile on a polite Frenchman in the next seat, who was helping to push the collection of coins and notes the *croupier* had massed together within her reach.

"*Vous avez de la chance aujourd'hui, madame,*" he replied.

Major Maxwell touched her arm.

"Come away now. You will only lose it all if you go on."

"Just one more try," she pleaded, but he was inexorable.

"Come along. It is getting late, and I want my lunch."

She let him persuade her and reluctantly left the table, pausing for a moment to reproach him, when Number Five turned up the moment they moved.

Together they left the hot rooms, sickly with the strong aroma of powder and scent. Outside the air struck cold in their faces; it was a gray day of mistral and the wind had a keen edge.

Maxwell was about to hail a *fiacre*, when his companion stopped him.

"Don't. I would much rather walk. I must have some air after that atmosphere in there."

"Why bother to go back to the hotel? Come and have some lunch with me at Ciro's," he suggested.

She hesitated. She was tempted to accept, but some instinct warned her not to receive too many favors from this man. He was almost a stranger to her; five days ago he had spoken to her brother Bobbie in the lounge of the hotel where they were both staying, and since

that night he had been their constant companion. Beyond the fact that his name was Maxwell and he was in the Indian army, on furlough, she knew nothing about him. As long as Bobbie had been there to chaperon her she saw no harm in accepting his attentions, but now that she was alone, Bobbie having been called to Paris on some mysterious business for a couple of days, she thought she had better be careful.

"I would much rather go back to the hotel, if you don't mind," she said as they walked down the Casino steps together. "The second post will be in, and I am rather anxious to get my letters. I hear from home every day. Miss Cox—that is Guy my little boy's governess, you know—sends me a postcard to say how he is. He has not been so well this last day or two—too many parties, I am afraid."

It was the second time that morning she had mentioned her boy. It had been a small shock to Maxwell to learn for the first time that she had a child. It seemed to make the fact that she was married so much more important. She had not spoken much about herself, and though he knew she had a husband somewhere, he had not considered the possibility of Midwood existing in the flesh.

Once she had broken the ice by mentioning Guy's name, she chattered on about her boy all the way up the steep hill, through the gardens to the higher part of the town where the hotels are. Maxwell was mildly bored. He disliked children because he did not understand them, and he would much rather have stopped at Ciro's for lunch or taken a *fiacre* to the hotel. But he had promised himself to look after his pretty companion in her brother's absence, so he was ready to do what she chose. He did not altogether approve of the casual way Bobbie had treated his sister, and he resolved to speak seriously to him when he came back. He had his suspicions about this sudden business in Paris.

"It seems such ages since I saw Guy," Mrs. Midwood was saying when Maxwell interrupted his train of thought to pay attention to what she was saying.

"He is only five, and such a cute little beggar. He wants me to bring him a French golliwog, and when he gets it he is going to say, '*oui, merci*'—that is all the French he knows. Do you think I can get a golliwog in Monte Carlo?"

Maxwell was not acquainted with French toys, and could suggest nothing better than that she should ask at a shop.

"But not now," he added hastily, as she made a sign of stopping to carry out his suggestion at once. "It is fearfully late, and I am too hungry to put off lunch any longer than is absolutely necessary. Coffee and rolls don't last long in this cold."

Mrs. Midwood was instantly penitent. "I am so sorry; I know you would much rather have lunched at Ciro's. If only Bobbie had been here, you two could have gone there together. It is really mean of him to go and desert us like this."

Maxwell saw here his opportunity to drop his friendly word of warning.

"He has no right to leave you alone," he began hotly. "Monte Carlo is not quite the place for a girl to be in without some male protection. I don't like it, and I shall tell Master Bobbie what I think of him when I see him."

She laughed at his old-fashioned notions.

"I am perfectly able to take care of myself. I am used to being alone. Do you know, I have not seen my husband for four years!"

"He is—"

"He has gone to look for the South Pole. Yes, he is the Lieutenant Midwood who is in charge of this last expedition. They have not been heard of for so long that I feel convinced I shall get news soon. I am sure I ought to have some great luck today, having won so much on *Zero Trois*. Jack is in latitudes where the thermometer is always below zero. I know I shall have news—Jack is simply mad on that sort of thing. This is his second visit to polar regions. I tell him he ought never to have married—it is hard lines on Guy and me."

When they arrived at the hotel at the

top of the hill the midday post had just come in. The *concierge* was busy sorting the letters. He came forward as soon as he saw them with a telegram in his hand.

"For me?" asked Maxwell, stretching out his hand.

"*Non, monsieur; pour madame,*" the man answered, handing the blue envelope to Mrs. Midwood. She took it and opened it without any excitement; she was accustomed to receiving them and felt no alarm.

"From Bobbie, I expect, to say when he is coming back," she remarked as she tore open the flap.

She read the short message without grasping its meaning.

Guy's condition serious. Appendicitis. Must operate immediately. Await consent.

"Oh!" she cried, and put out her hand to grip some support. "I don't understand—"

She swayed as though she could not remain upright. She had gone quite white and her mouth trembled. The shock was so unexpected, she was incapable of thought or action. Maxwell was alarmed; he thought she was going to cry or faint, and he had a horror of any sort of scene. He put her into a seat and stood beside her, not knowing what he ought to do.

"You have had bad news?" he said helplessly. "Can I do anything? May I see what the telegram says?"

She gave him the slip of paper and watched anxiously while he read it.

"What am I to do?" she moaned. "What am I to do?"

"It is quite simple," he said in a would-be cheerful tone. "The little chap seems to be rather bad. They cannot operate till they have your consent. All you have to do is to wire at once and then start for home as soon as you can."

She shuddered and hid her face in her hands.

"I could not—I couldn't! I have such a horror of operations—my sister died after one in fearful agony when she was fifteen! I shall never forget it! I can't let them touch Guy—I know he will die. He is such a little chap—he is only five."

"The chances are a hundred to one that he dies if they don't operate," Maxwell muttered in an aside. He could not understand her attitude; to his mind it seemed such a simple thing—a mere formality—to wire her consent and then get home to her child. She appeared to be outraged at the idea and kept repeating: "I couldn't let them touch him—I couldn't—he is only five," without being conscious of what she was saying.

With an Englishman's horror of anything approaching sentiment, Maxwell hated to witness her grief. He did not know what to do.

"I don't know what you had better do," he said severely.

"I must get home, somehow—at once," she faltered.

"But you will have to reply to the telegram," he reminded her. "They will be waiting—they won't know what to do. Why not brace yourself to do what they ask? Let me send a wire consenting? You won't know anything about it; it will be all over one way or the other by the time you get there."

"I couldn't—I couldn't—" Again that hideous cry. It was getting on the man's nerves. Something must be done. It seemed natural for him to take the lead.

"I will send a wire for you telling them you are coming at once, and that they are not to do anything till you come. Is that right? And if you will give me your brother's address in Paris, I will wire him to meet you tomorrow morning. There won't be time for him to come here, and you will want somebody to look after you. Have you got a maid or anybody? No? Poor little woman, quite alone!" he added to himself.

She looked up at him gratefully. Her face was drawn with grief, but to his relief she did not cry—only her haggard eyes told what she suffered.

"Thank you," she murmured, sensible of what his reliable presence meant to her; "you are good."

"I will book you a place on the train at the same time. You ought to catch the *train de luxe* this afternoon—four

thirty I think it is, but I will find out. You will be in London tomorrow night." He was thankful to have something definite to do, and anxious not to forget a single detail that could add to her comfort.

"And if I were you," he added, coming back from the door to where she still sat on the hard red velvet bench—"if I were you, I would go upstairs now and have some lunch sent up to your room. You must keep up, you know; no good in breaking down. Get the *femme de chambre* to help you pack. I won't be long."

"Funny things women are," he said to himself as he wrote the telegrams in the post office, his teeth clenched round the stem of a beloved pipe. There was no time to think of lunch at present, and smoking eased the empty interior ache for the time. From the way she had talked about the boy he had thought she was devoted to him—yet she refused to say one word that would cost her nothing and give the child his last chance. Maxwell was tempted to take the matter into his own hands and send a telegram in her name, telling them to do their best. She might be angry, but it would be too late then to stop them. Yet he hardly liked to interfere—he did not know her well enough to take such a liberty—and, after all, it was no business of his. She would probably think him a busybodying old fool—the chances were the little chap would get over it without their having to cut him open. He checked the half-formed impulse to tear up the slip of paper he had already written and pushed it with a five-franc piece through the opening toward the clerk.

That business over, he went to Cook's office near the Hermitage to book her seat on the train, but he had an uncomfortable inward sensation that made him wish he had acted on his first impulse. By good luck there were two vacant places left. He booked the second as an afterthought, and had some trouble to make the man understand the berths must be in separate compartments. He might as well see her as far as Paris and hand her over to Bobbie's care; she was

not fit to travel alone. After all, he was on his way home. He must make a start sooner or later. A run of bad luck at the tables had dampened his enthusiasm for Monte Carlo.

Mrs. Midwood appeared to take it as a matter of course that he should escort her as far as Paris. He found that the elaborate excuses he had invented to make his sudden departure natural were not necessary. She was still too dazed with the shock and her anxiety to find anything strange that materially added to her personal comfort.

All night long, as the train rushed through the darkness in the cold and the snow which met them as soon as they left Cannes, Maxwell kept regretting his telegram. As he turned restlessly on his narrow bed the thought of Guy haunted him. Perhaps at that moment the child was fighting for his life because he, Maxwell, had been afraid to risk the disapproval of one woman. He did not blame the mother—women were naturally timid, and she did not understand how serious it was. He blamed himself, and anxiety drove away all chance of sleep.

The train rushed on roaring through the darkness in the cold and the snow.

They were an hour late at Paris.

Maxwell, having finished his breakfast of coffee and rolls in the restaurant car, went to look for Mrs. Midwood a few minutes before they reached the Gare de Lyons.

"Good morning," he said in as cheerful a tone as he could manage. "I hope you have been able to sleep and now feel less tired. Had breakfast? You can't do without food, you know."

She shook her head—she had been unable to sleep or eat. Her white face haunted him.

"I am just getting out here to look for your brother," he added, his hand on the door of her compartment. "He is sure to be waiting for us, but he won't know where to look, and it will save time if I go to meet him."

She had nothing to say, so he left her, conscious of a feeling of relief that his responsibilities were to end so soon. But when he got out on the platform he

could see no sign of Bobbie; except for a few station officials the place was deserted. He walked to the end and back without success. The cold bit into his bones; after the enervating heat of the train the contrast was acute. He shuddered and wriggled deeper into his fur-lined coat.

When he got back to her carriage she was sitting as he had left her, her chin on her hand, gazing out of the window without seeing anything.

"He is not there," Maxwell began, trying to keep the anxiety that was growing in his mind out of his voice. "He will be at the Gare du Nord, I expect—thought it would save time if he met us there."

He left her alone as soon as the train started again, under the pretext of booking places for lunch.

At the Gare du Nord there was no sign of Bobbie.

Maxwell was prepared for the worst by this time; his telegram must have gone astray. He decided to go on to Calais with her; he could not desert her now. She did not say much, but he could see she was glad to have him to rely upon.

At Calais they just missed the first boat by twenty minutes, which was unfortunate, but to be expected with the snow. It had accompanied them all through France and lay everywhere—nothing but snow, although it was the third of March. The two hours of waiting in the restaurant of the Hotel Terminus till the arrival of the boat were the longest and most trying part of the whole journey. Maxwell persuaded Mrs. Midwood to sit by the fire and have some coffee, as she had eaten nothing all day. The time passed somehow. Now and again she talked a little—always of Guy, telling tales of his babyhood, his clever sayings. Such talk bored Maxwell, but he kept himself in check and found the right questions to keep the topic going. It relieved her to speak about her child and took her mind off her grief.

They had a calm but cold crossing; the sun was setting behind an ugly bank of cloud, thick with snow, as the vessel

steamed out of Calais harbor. In spite of the keen wind Maxwell paced the deck all the way across.

At Dover he was glad he had come with her, for she was quite helpless and bewildered by the crowds, who were good-naturedly scrambling to be first off the boat and secure seats on the train. They got to Victoria well up to time. As the train slowly drew up at the platform, he noticed two men waiting by themselves, a little apart from the rest of the crowd; they appeared to be on the lookout for someone. He drew his companion's attention to them.

"My father and brother!" she cried, and was out of the carriage almost before the train had stopped. She had forgotten all about her companion who had so faithfully escorted her all through the long journey; she left him without a word of thanks.

Maxwell looked on at the greeting. At first, as is usual on meeting after an absence, both spoke at once—there was nothing but question and answer, about trivial, unimportant matters—the small change of daily talk.

"We expected you before this."

"I know; we just missed the first boat."

"Where is Bobbie? Is not he with you?"

"No; we missed each other at Paris. Father, how is Guy?" At last she got to her lips the question that was in her eyes and in her heart.

Maxwell could not catch the answer; but ten minutes later, when he was waiting for the customs officer to examine his bag, he saw her brother a few paces off, and went up to him to put the same question.

"Excuse me asking—but I traveled

from Monte Carlo with Mrs. Midwood; I was with her when she got the telegram. How is Guy?"

The young man looked at him in cold surprise, as much as to say, "Who the devil are you?" and "What have you got to do with it?" but he replied at once:

"Guy died this morning. If they had operated there was just a chance he might have pulled through."

"Poor little chap!" said Maxwell, genuinely sorry; and again the uncomfortable feeling of regret for opportunity recognized but ignored came over him.

He wished he had sent that telegram.

Outside the station it was beginning to rain; the pavements glistened in the light of the lamps. As his cab turned out of the station yard, he heard the newspaper boy shouting something, and his eye caught a name on a poster.

"Success of the Antarctic Expedition—Lieutenant Midwood Within Sight of His Goal—"

He checked his cab and bought a paper, which he tried to read in the uncertain light of the lamp as the cab rolled swiftly westward, down Victoria Street, along Whitehall toward Pall Mall. The article was short; beyond the bare fact, very little was known of the expedition; there was no mention of Guy or his mother.

"Poor little woman!" he said aloud as he tossed the crumpled sheet to the floor of the cab. "How will she dare to face him when he comes home?" Then a wave of indignation came over him. "But he had no right to leave her! The man does not deserve such a wife as she is. He had no right to leave her, and I should like to tell him so."



BE as independent as circumstances permit, but if you happen to be a tail, be a logical tail, and do not try to wag the dog.

CONSEQUENCES

By NORMAN ROE

ON the evening of June eighteen Captain Manson—Seventeenth Goorkha Regiment—mixed his drinks. That is how it all happened. Now Captain Manson was an excellent company officer, who seldom looked farther than the King's Regulations. But when you have been encamped for a fortnight in a sort of Devil's Kitchen, with a crowd of unmannerly Pathans potting at you night and day from the hills above, you are apt to remember things. So Captain Manson remembered his old school Speech Day, and as there were eleven old boys in the brigade, not counting himself and his own colonel, he arranged a little dinner party.

Perhaps the speeches, from a scholastic point of view, might have been improved upon, but the wines, which were a job lot borrowed bottle by bottle, were most astonishingly excellent. Captain Manson said so, and as, in his capacity of organizing secretary, he scrupulously sampled each, he was certainly in the best position to judge. The fare, too, was good, though it is not easy for thirteen persons to eat by the light of two candles, shaded very carefully with the outside cover of an old copy of the *Graphic*.

But even if you eat the frilling off a hill sheep cutlet, it is always better than a lead bullet. The dinner was a great success, and afterward young Eastcott, who was inclined to be romantic, produced from his pocketbook a copy of the old School Song, and, across the little valley to the hills above, across to where the lean tribesmen lay behind their rifles, came words in a tongue unknown even to the bazaars of Quetta:

*"Quoties advenia
Feriarum mensis;
Semper domum floreat
Wellingtoniensis.
Semper domum floreat
Wellington-o-oni-en-sis."*

With a long-drawn parting howl the celebration closed, and Captain Manson, who, it will be remembered, had mixed his drinks, sallied forth into the chill night air and engaged in the double—or was it quadruple?—task of picking his way between the tent pegs, and starting the song all over again from the somewhat troublesome word, "Quoties."

But "the month of the holidays"—the holidays of hard work after the labor of doing nothing—was to come sooner than even he expected, for his general officer had suddenly decided on a combined attack on the hills in the coming dawn.

Now Captain Manson was an excellent company officer, but at three o'clock the next morning, as he loaded his service revolver, he felt a good deal less high-spirited than the occasion warranted. He had been longing for it since the day he left Peshawur; he had been longing for it more than ever since he saw Bob Crofton die. It is not pleasant to see a bullet sent through any man's stomach when he is lighting his pipe, and Crofton had been a particular friend of his. So there were some old scores to pay off.

But at the same time his head was aching, and he remembered that they had sat down thirteen to dinner. He wished that fellow on the Donkey Hill would stop sniping—then he remembered that he was a company officer, took a peg of brandy and pulled on his boots.

Forty minutes later he was lying with his men behind some bowlders waiting the rush of the enemy. It was an ugly rush, for they had almost reached the summit, and hillsmen are unused to sitting down in their mud forts and waiting to be blown up.

He could see them, not two hundred yards away, leaping down from cover to cover and stopping at each to pick off any of his men who showed themselves too rashly. They were very close now, and Captain Manson did not feel as cool as he could have wished.

He wriggled his hand into the breast pocket of his tunic and pulled out a photograph. There were two or three letters tied up with it by a piece of ribbon, but the photograph was on the outside. For a moment he looked at it. He had met this girl the last time he was in England, and they had written once or twice since—that was all. He was not in love with her—Captain Manson never fell in love; in fact, he very seldom even thought of her, and if he hadn't mixed his drinks that night he certainly wouldn't have been such a silly ass as to be looking at her photograph now. That is what he told himself.

Of course, it might be asked what her photograph was doing in his breast pocket, but that, surely, is Captain Manson's business. Anyhow, there they were, so he took one look at the photograph—really, he had never felt so jumpy before—and began to put it back again. All this took place while the tribesmen were covering about ten yards, remember. He began to put it back again, but it is not easy to coax a very stiff photograph into your breast pocket when you are lying on your chest behind a bowlder, so he rolled over a little. A tribesman saw him—and he went on rolling. . . .

Five minutes later, when the rush had been stopped and the hill taken, young Eastcott came down to look for Captain Manson. He found him, and the little bundle with the pale blue ribbon was still in his hand; it was a good deal stained, though. Young Eastcott took the bundle, and later on, owing

to his romantic nature, an idea came to him. So he opened one of the letters and read the address and the signature, and then closed it again.

But with the first mails home a letter went to a Miss Edith Evershed. It was quite a tactful letter. Young Eastcott merely said that being the first to find Captain Manson's body, he had also found the inclosed packet clasped in his hand, and having taken the liberty of looking for the writer's name, he thought she might like to have the packet as a memento. Then he added a few nice things about Captain Manson, and sent off the letter by registered post. That is where the tragedy really begins.

It wasn't young Eastcott's fault, of course, that "Miss" Edith Evershed was a married woman, and that her husband was sitting at the breakfast table when the letter arrived. But Mr. Evershed, who was a stockbroker, saw the regimental crest on young Eastcott's letter and the pale blue ribbon which had been most carefully tied up again, and, knowing of Captain Manson's death, he began to ask questions. That is where the mistake was made. His wife had liked the dead man; she was sorry he had fallen, but she had never been in love with him; he was not the kind of man to fall in love with. She could no more have fallen in love with him than Arthur Rackham could illustrate the King's Regulations. But when her husband grew suspicious, she became silent. He had no business to distrust her, this husband of hers!

While he was scheming and squabbling in that horrid Stock Exchange, this other man had died like a hero, with her letters in his hand. And what poor little letters they were! Why hadn't she said more to him? She was sure she had felt more! And yet he had understood her, all the same—he had read between the lines, this brave lover. Why? Because he had cared for her, of course! If her husband had cared for her, he would have understood, too.

So she keeps those sainted letters locked away, and she is quite sure in

her heart that Captain Manson allowed himself to be killed just because of her husband, and she sometimes wonders if people are ever killed on the Stock Exchange.

Her husband, too, has made up a little story. He is rather sorry, on the whole, that Captain Manson died, be-

cause it would have been pleasant to have thrashed him. So they very seldom speak now, he and his wife.

No, I don't think there is any particular moral to the story—except that you shouldn't mix your drinks, and that it is unwise to open letters at the breakfast table.



A PERSIAN SONNET

By HARRY F. BOWLING

MY work was a lotus lily,
Clean spun with a silken thread;
But the needle ran into my finger
And the white flower turned to red.

I was thinking of him, my hero,
At war with an alien power.
What if they spill his life blood?
Would it drip—as mine drips on the flower?

Then I seem to be hearing him gallop
Back home thro' the echoing street;
But 'twas only my heart's loud throbbing
That sounded like horse's feet.

And he seems to have sent me a letter—
It flutters across the floor;
But 'twas only some jasmine blossoms
Blown in thro' the open door.

And this is your pearl, my loved one,
All afire where the sunbeams flash;
But 'twas only an idle teardrop
Hung low from a quivering lash.

And backward and forward my needle
Keeps dragging the thread in vain,
For I know that my love and the lily
Are dyed with the selfsame stain.

THE WAYS OF WOMAN

By RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

"YOU insist on doing this?" asked the Husband.
"I do!" replied the Wife firmly.

"But, my dear—"

"Stop!" she commanded. "Nothing you can say will alter my determination! My mind is made up!"

"In that case," replied the Husband, who had transmuted the base metal of experience into the precious gold of knowledge, "I have nothing more to say. I realize that once possessed of an idea you are, like all your sex, beyond argument."

"Do you mean," demanded the Wife with displeasure, "that I am incapable of seeing reason?"

"Reason with a woman," answered the Husband from behind his paper, "is like water on a duck's back—in one ear and out the other."

"You are wrong!" cried the Wife triumphantly. "And to prove it, sir, I have already changed my mind!"

"Do you love me?" asked the Woman anxiously.

"Infinitely!" vowed the Lover.

"More than you did at first?"

"Much more!"

"And you will love me more all the time? Tomorrow more than today? Next year more than this?"

"Impossible!" he exclaimed. "I love you now as much as it is possible for man to love woman!"

The Woman was silent.

The next day when he called no one answered his knock.

"It is your soul I worship!" cried the First Suitor, who was youthful. "There has never been one so pure, so white, so wonderful!"

The Lady looked bored.

"And I love your mind," exclaimed the Second Suitor, who was middle-aged. "So rich, so brilliant—"

The Lady frowned.

"Madame," whispered the Third Suitor, who was elderly, "you have the most perfect, the most fascinating, the most bewitching ankle in the world!"

The Lady turned, smiled and tapped him with her fan.

"Flatterer!" she murmured.



THE man who is honest merely because honesty is the best policy is a dishonest man.

THE CRAVING

By ANGELA MORGAN

HILDA let her broom and mop clatter into a corner.

"It does no good!" she cried passionately. "It does no good!" Revolutionary changes must come before cleanliness could be. She felt her young strength swoon before the knowledge. Through the open window the tumult of all outdoors rushed to her—a huge, unending roar, pierced by the sharp staccato of horses' hoofs.

She leaned out wearily, with her elbows on the sill and her pretty, discouraged face supported by her hands. Hilda had a comeliness that was robust without being gross. Even in her working dress there was a delicacy, a freshness about her entirely out of keeping with her environment.

Directly below her the secondhand shop protruded its rubbish. Dingy mattresses, broken stoves, beds and chairs sprawled upon the pavement, while just across the street a dry goods shop flashed its unspeakable cheapness in her face—limp calico dresses of green and purple, scarlet blankets covered with boisterous pink flowers.

"Ugh!" she cried. "It's awful. I can't stand it."

For Hilda had been out to service and had glimpsed another life. Her path and the path of the rich had crossed. For a breathless period she had been privileged to touch the hem of wealth's garment—a menial's touch only, yet the thrill of that contact was with her yet.

She knew the difference now—knew it poignantly. And there was no forgetting.

She closed the window with a bang. The sound reverberated through her, rousing the full force of her rebellion.

Everyone may have his refuge against intolerable surroundings. Hilda's father and brothers found theirs in the corner saloon. Although she frowned at that, the girl had her panacea, nevertheless—another sort of intoxicant.

Not six blocks away, in a wide, smooth thoroughfare, wealth and fashion at this hour paraded. If she went now, she would find herself in the full swing of it, could bask in the sheen and the glitter, slaking her thirst with the tide at flood.

Even here in her cheap, mean street she felt the power of the magnet drawing her, heard the call of the Avenue, potent, irresistible, a high, clear, golden note, triumphing over the din.

In the small closet back of the washstand hung the one precious tailored suit that she possessed. Mrs. Preston Stevens had given it to her, cast off from her own exuberant wardrobe. Her former mistress had, likewise, given her a stylish turban and a pair of high-heeled shoes. Hilda got them all out and put them on the bed. A transforming fire had come to her cheeks and her hands moved eagerly.

She had a sleek, sumptuous feeling when, half an hour later, she let herself out of the door. The grime and clatter of the street were an insult to her elegance. Loathing swept over her, urging her faster and faster through the neighborhood she so despised.

Now she was emerging into clean, wide streets, where prosperity sat enthroned. It seemed a wizard transformation. Never before, Hilda thought, had the contrast seemed quite so sharp.

At last—Fifth Avenue! The girl's shoulders went up unconsciously. Her head lifted; her chest expanded; she

felt the shock and the spur of it in every nerve. Without her knowledge, she mimicked the manner of the stylish women pedestrians; her chin tilted disdainfully and her eyelids drooped.

It was her hour. For this brief snatch of time she was one with the onward sweep of luxury, of pomp, of fashion. For a keen, greedy hour she walked and watched and envied, glutting her vision, whetting her desire. At last, retracing her steps, she found herself directly opposite the Waldorf.

On the instant a daring wish that had often come to her flowered into full determination. She had never entered the Waldorf. She had only looked breathlessly from a distance, with creepy chills in her flesh at the mere thought of going in. Now she would go. Why not? The parlors surely were open to the public.

She felt the usual panic in her scurry across the street, right in the face of snorting vehicles that scarcely stopped for the policeman's signal. Now she was safe across. She pushed on boldly till she had almost reached the portals of magnificence. Then she stopped short, quaking. Two splendidly gowned women, just descended from an automobile, bore down upon her, each a stern Nemesis in judgment on her daring.

Hilda did not enter. Instead, she passed on carelessly, as if her purpose had never been. Her cheeks were burning and her knees shook. A fearful thought came. There must be a difference, a sweeping difference, between her and those women who were not afraid. It was as easy for them to approach splendor as it was for her to turn the knob of her wretched tenement. What was the difference?

She walked on, raging, suffering. The glow and the magic were vanishing. It was the misery stage of her intoxication—the bitter taste in the mouth. All at once she felt the whole crushing force of it—the arrogance of solid wealth massed against her littleness. *She didn't count—that was the sum of it. She didn't matter in the least.*

Why didn't she? Why couldn't she? With all her feeble strength she struck out blindly against the fact.

Dusk was coming on, and in every tower and window tiers of light sprang into bloom. Hilda was hurrying now. She did not know why—did not realize that she was eager to take refuge in her humble street because it was the only place where she could be somebody, the only place where she would count.

She felt strength coming to her the moment she turned into the hated district. Never mind. Some day she, too, would ride in an automobile. She, too, would stare icily at the people that did not count. She would live the life of luxury. How she would do it she did not know. But she would—*some day*.

At her own landing she paused at last, exhausted. Someone scuttled out of the kitchen door at the farther end of the hall. "Hilda—Hilda!" It was her mother's hoarse, excited voice.

"What has happened?" asked the girl.

"Ach, Hilda—hurry in to them—a lady and a gentleman—swells! They've been waiting for you—ach—an hour!"

Hilda opened the door dazedly. Then she stood dumb. As if, by some strange magic, the force of her will had precipitated her desire in flesh and blood—there, amid the cheapness of the family sitting room, sat two of the Invincibles.

There was no mistaking them—the young woman, proud of head, smart of attire, perfectly possessed, the young man, tall, good-looking and immaculate.

"This is Miss Hilda Gertz?" Her voice had the quality and inflection that belong exclusively to the cultivated few. "I am Miss Schuyler. And may I introduce Mr. Forbes?"

They were names the girl had read repeatedly in the charmed society list. She bowed several times, backing confusedly against the wall.

"We have come to ask a favor," pursued the young woman, smiling.

"Yes, miss," murmured Hilda eagerly. "Anything I can do, miss—"

"I hope you don't think we've presumed," the young man added, with polite solicitude. "Doubtless it seems most rude of us, taking possession of your home in this way—"

"Oh, no, no, sir! I'm sure it's all

right, sir. I hope you make yourselves at home. It is bad I keep you so long waiting."

Hilda, conscious of extreme awkwardness, sat down on a green sofa that showed its stuffing. Miss Schuyler's next words set her heart violently beating.

"As friends of Mrs. Preston Stevens, we have come to ask your aid in a special work we are doing."

Friends of Mrs. Preston Stevens! Ah, she was right! She had known it must be, for she had seen their kind too often to have thought anything else. The room swam in sparkling haze.

"She sent you, then? She is got back from Europe?" She almost choked in her agitation.

"No, not yet. She is expected soon. But we have letters from her, with instructions." And Mr. Forbes smiled engagingly.

Then Miss Schuyler spoke. "You were—companion to Mrs. Stevens, were you not?"

Companion! The word struck Hilda's ears like music. No one had ever before spoken so of her position.

"Yes, miss," she managed to articulate. "I was—companion to her for a few months."

"Then you know, of course, of her great interest in recreation for young girls. You remember—she is president of the Committee on Social Recreation and Vacation Resources. Mr. Forbes and I are workers with her—officers in that committee."

"Oh—yes!" breathed Hilda. Back in her brain vague recollections stirred, of dance halls, clubs, and reading rooms managed by the rich, where working girls might find diversion.

A painful uncertainty quivered. Did they think of her as like those others—mere working girls—in need of charity?

Miss Schuyler's next words released her pulses.

"We have been looking for a long time for some well-informed, aspiring young girl who could take command of the work in this district—as an officer, I mean. We want someone who knows the neighborhood thoroughly. Do you

not feel, Miss Gertz, that you would like to help these others—less fortunate than yourself?"

Hilda's chest heaved. So! Others did at last see her as she was! She had always felt that someone, some time, must realize that she was different from the herd.

"You—you are awful kind," she stammered, with moist eyes. "I'd like to do it, if you think I can."

"Oh, we are sure of that!" young Forbes declared. "Mrs. Stevens persuaded us that you would be just the one. It has always been her wish to promote your interests in some way—place you in a permanent position."

"Oh, that is good of her—so kind!" said Hilda. She choked, this time with gratitude. "She used to say to me she would get me a fine place some day."

"Yes—a position that would represent you—give you a chance to show your real abilities."

Hilda opened her lips, but could not speak. These were the kind of people she had read of in books and stories—far above the poor in station, yet able and willing to admit superiority wherever they found it, willing to go down into poverty, if need be, to discover the diamond.

What was it Forbes was saying? Hilda held her breath.

"Suppose we all go somewhere for dinner? We can talk things over so much better—arrange all the details. Will you allow us, Miss Gertz?"

Hilda, taken unaware, blushed and fluttered, turning to her mother, who up to this time had sat nodding and chuckling in her corner, tongue-tied with awe.

The pleased, proud woman spoke up quickly. "Yes, Hilda, go—go with the lady and gentleman."

Now that her chance had come, the girl was frantic with fright. When she had gained the street with them she began to wonder wildly if everything about her was just right. Did the powder show? Was her hat too large? Were her cheeks too red to look refined? Her anxious eyes searched Miss Schuyler's face and hat and coat, alert to see the difference.

THE CRAVING

A horrible thought came. Could it be that the rank odor from the hall lamp clung to her clothing, and did they notice it? In her nervous, excited state, a horde of fears attacked her. In spite of their kindness, were they, after all, ashamed of her?

That would depend upon where they took her. This much she decided quickly. If they were willing to brave the publicity of a prominent place—well, surely, there couldn't be anything so dreadful the matter with her appearance.

Now they were passing one of the smaller hosteries. And now another. They were advancing upon Fifth Avenue. Where were they going? Hilda's breath came now in little gusts.

They walked a bit north, then turned at the corner of Thirty-fourth Street and crossed. Hilda shivered—they were pausing directly before the Waldorf. She found herself holding back, conscious in this flashing moment of her thousand deficiencies, conscious that she had been a *menial*.

But they, clearly, had no such thought. To them she was an equal. At last she was sure of it.

They guided her in through the brilliant doors. Swift exhilaration seized her. It was like that she used to know, when, as a child, her father pushed her swing too high—far out and up; and on the perilous return she clung screaming to the ropes, feeling the fearful rush of air against her, with every nerve giving way.

Now they had reached the dining room. The floor seemed to lengthen out beneath Hilda's feet, stretching away into a blurred hundred miles. She walked on a feathery substance, like clouds, aware of waltzing stars and of curious faces looking toward her—

Now the head waiter was approaching. Several waiters were hovering.

"Sit here," Miss Schuyler murmured, while the girl felt her coat removed as if by magic.

She did not know what happened next. Consciousness became a velvet hollow, padded so thickly she could scarcely think. Her own voice, echoing from this hollow, had a strange distant sound.

All at once she found herself staring fixedly at the table. Dismay smote her at the array of spoons and forks. Which should she use first? Surely, she ought to know. She had read all about it, time and again, in the papers. But to save her life, she could not have recalled a bit of it now.

Each hair of her head was an electric thrill of fright. One thing was certain: the moment must come when she would be obliged to decide. That one moment loomed before her—immense, inevitable.

"What shall we have?" Miss Schuyler was smiling. Hilda had hoped she would not ask her. She hadn't the faintest idea. She forced an answering smile through a parched stiffness of lips.

"You—you do the ordering," she stammered.

"Yes, of course. But I thought you might have some preference."

"No, thank you, miss. I'll leave it with you."

Beads of perspiration stood out sparkling on her upper lip. She felt her hands grow moist and hot in their tight gloves.

"A cocktail?" her hostess was asking gently.

"Oh, no—that is—yes—no. I never take anything to drink." The next instant she felt that she had betrayed her ignorance. Of course, all swell people had wines with dinner. It showed she was a nobody.

"Won't you, please?" It was Forbes now who spoke.

"Certainly—yes, if—if you wish."

Now she was uncomfortable, because she had said no when Miss Schuyler asked her. Fear, grown poignantly prophetic, showed her a host of blunders ahead.

"A Martini?"

"Yes, miss. I think so."

What other kinds were there? She had forgotten, but she would risk that, anyway. Now she thought of her hands rigid under the table. She could not keep them forever hidden, but she hated to display their redness, with the gloves removed.

A sort of roaring started in her head, deafening her. Now she must produce her hands, for the waiter was bringing

the cocktails. She did it desperately, striving to appear indifferent. Her anxious eyes watched every move of Miss Schuyler, sipping her glass with calm, unhurried grace. By watching her hostess closely, she could be safe in everything.

That was what helped her in the matter of spoons and forks. Before she knew it, the worst of the agony was over. The entire fish course had been achieved and the world still turned on its axis.

"And now—we'll talk about the Re-creation Center," suggested Miss Schuyler brightly.

Hilda felt a great relief. On that comparatively familiar ground she could steady herself somewhat.

"White wine, or red?" someone was murmuring.

Hilda did not know which to take, so her hostess smiled indulgently and ordered for her.

Suddenly there came the sound of tuning violins. Hilda's pulses leaped. She had the true German's love for music. All at once every vestige of fear and discomfort vanished for her. She became aware that she was talking easily, as she had never talked before.

After a while she gained sufficient courage to look about her at the hats and diamonds of the women guests. *This was society!* She told herself so, breathlessly. She was no longer an outsider; she was one of the sumptuous throng she had so often watched.

She leaned back, sighing softly. Her arms had a delicious, leaden languor; her brain was luminous as with electric light and her blood sang. A wonderful contentment wrapped her about; a large knowledge that the world was good, that people were adorable, music divine, and herself the happiest mortal in existence.

Glancing up, she caught the look Forbes gave her. It was a full, shining look—straight from the depths of an undoubted admiration. Others had called her pretty—others who didn't count. But this was the first time that a man of the world, a man of taste, had given her that smiling glance of approval.

She felt self-consciousness coming on again. Miss Schuyler rescued her.

"Mrs. Stevens will be relieved to know that you are taken care of," she remarked. "She would probably have looked after it long ago, but of course she has had such desperately important things to worry her—"

Hilda looked up quickly. She had known much of Mrs. Stevens's family difficulties, but she was not sure that Miss Schuyler referred to that.

She waited.

"You mean"—she ventured at length, guardedly.

Miss Schuyler lowered her eyes. "One hesitates to talk of it," she said quietly.

"I—I beg your pardon," stammered Hilda.

Her hostess raised her eyes frankly at that. "I didn't mean it as a—rebuke at all," she said. "But of course it is very unfortunate—the scandal and notoriety that must come."

"It is a great pity," Forbes observed, "when a woman of Mrs. Preston Stevens's caliber permits her marital difficulties to get into the courts. We're all terribly sorry about it."

"Into the courts!" the girl cried, before she knew it. "Then there is a *divorce*?"

A swarm of memories came. Hilda, though but a short time in Mrs. Preston Stevens's service, had been in touch with the most vivid experiences of her mistress's life. She had been genuinely touched by the woman's predicament, and she had served her loyally.

"It seems a divorce is pending now," Miss Schuyler answered, with evident reluctance. "Preston Stevens will sue. He makes—rather unfortunate charges—against her. Of course she will fight the suit—at least, we are looking to her to do it." She changed the subject abruptly. "Gossip is such a fearful thing. I detest it."

Hilda felt unmistakably guilty now. She sat bathed in the unhappy consciousness that Miss Schuyler had thought her curious, even rude. But in spite of herself, she ached to know the rest. She had supposed, all this while,

that the husband had forgiven, that all misunderstanding had been cleared up. All sorts of apprehensions assailed her now.

She had been very close to the heart of that storm-tossed period. Even the family servants, retained for years, had not been favored as she was—she, who had clung but a dizzy season to the garment of wealth.

That weakness of human nature, the spirit of bragging, sprang to ardent life in the girl. She could not bear the thought that Forbes and Miss Schuyler should not recognize her importance.

"I—I hope you pardon me," she made bold to say, "if I am so curious about Mrs. Stevens. I—I—"

Then her stammering agitation loosened unexpectedly. Unwonted fluency came to her aid.

"I know more about Mrs. Preston Stevens—more about that whole trouble—than any other person, even her own mother. Mrs. Stevens told me so herself, many and many's the time."

The moment the words were out, she experienced a slight shock, a soft wonder at her own daring. Then shame covered her. Would Miss Schuyler ever forgive her? Now, indeed, she had committed the unpardonable sin.

But there was no expression except kindly sympathy in her hostess's glance.

"Indeed?" she responded. "That certainly is interesting. One should esteem it an honor to have the confidence of Mrs. Stevens."

Forbes, too, was looking at her with earnest attention.

"You must agree with us, then, that it is most unfortunate her name should ever have been linked with that of Scarza. I think her friends—most of them—blame her for that. Of course we don't—we take the other side. But the others—her family, particularly—blame her most decidedly."

Hilda's loyal spirit leaped to the defense.

"Blame her! Why don't they blame him—the husband? It was every bit his fault. She could not help it that her name was put with the opera singer. Why did the husband not *protect*?"

"That is our contention exactly. But her family feel that she should never, for any reason, have permitted—"

"*Ach!*" protested Hilda fiercely, reverting to her parent tongue. "That is it—that is it. But those others, they don't know what I know. She is not the kind to have such affairs. Her husband—he *drove* her to it!"

"Drove her? Oh, that is impossible! Preston Stevens was too kind and considerate—"

"Considerate!" spluttered Hilda. "Kind! If that is what you call kind. To be always swearing at her and torturing her and jealous of her—never a day but what he was putting detectives on her—"

"Detectives!"

"Yes—crowds of them. She was hounded day and night. They sit on her doorstep; they run after her carriage; she was most crazy. She sat up all night, crying. He was a brute. He struck her. I saw him strike her."

Hilda had at last gained the full attention she craved.

"This is all a revelation to me," Forbes asserted. "It doesn't seem possible that Stevens—and yet, he might have been fearfully upset about something. Perhaps that was the time he found the letters—Scarza's letters—"

"*Ach—but he did not find the letters!* He only suspect about that. I always took good care—"

She bridled, flushing scarlet, conscious that this might be betrayal.

"But, besides"—she gasped and floundered—"they was nothing but such letters a gentleman should write. Anybody could see by them how fine and every way a gentleman the young opera singer was."

"Oh—we have no doubt of that," Miss Schuyler hastened to state. "His sympathy for her was unquestionably of the highest quality."

"It was splendid of you to protect her as you did," Forbes applauded. "She should feel eternally indebted to you."

"No doubt she does realize the indebtedness," suggested the hostess, smiling.

"Yes. Miss Gertz may depend upon

it, Mrs. Stevens will see that her future is cared for."

"Oh—that is no matter," protested Hilda. "I did it not for a reward. I wanted to save her from troubles. No, indeed!" with a little triumphant laugh. "Mr. Stevens could not get those letters. I always took good care."

The sound of the words repeated had a stimulating effect. Her mind swelled and glowed with memories that rushed. One recollection, like a rocket, shot up brilliantly, illuminating all her brain.

"To the last—yes, right up to the very last day. You know about how everything broke up and she hurried away—across the water? That was when I find a whole box of these notes from the opera singer. She leave them by mistake—she thought she packed them in her trunk. I got them before anybody could see. And I have kept them ever since—locked up at home—till she comes back. I keep them safe and sound—for her."

She had flung the bomb. She had uttered the supreme proof of her importance. She knew it by the tense silence that greeted her words.

Miss Schuyler drew a long breath. "It is the first time," she said, "that I have ever gotten at the truth of that unfortunate story. You are probably the only one who has sufficient authority to speak at all. I am indebted to you for clearing it up."

Hilda leaned back in her chair and strove to seem calm. At last—she did count! She was somebody! Today she had writhed and crawled with the lash of wealth in her face. She had been but a speck in the whirl. Tonight—

All the way home she glowed with this exultation. At the door her new-found friends shook hands with her, declaring they had never enjoyed an evening more.

"Tomorrow afternoon Miss Schuyler and I will call again and take what report you have about the needs of this district. In the meantime, do you not think you could collect considerable data? We don't wish to rush you, but an entire morning given up to it might accomplish much."

Hilda's willingness rose to conquer every obstacle.

Miss Schuyler turned, with a pretty graciousness. "One of these days you must come to my house for tea. I want you to meet some of the younger members of the committee."

The rest of the week was a whirl of surprises for Hilda. One day came a dainty note from Miss Schuyler. Would she like to attend the theater that night? "You have been so good in helping us with our work—please let us return in some small measure the kindness."

The following evening they went again to the Waldorf for dinner.

The greatest surprise of all for the girl was the growing attentiveness, the marked admiration of Forbes. It troubled her seriously at first. She had supposed, somehow, that he and Miss Schuyler were engaged. True, she had no real cause to think it—the two were merely co-workers in the Recreation Committee. And yet, each time she found her heart bounding at his glance she experienced a sense of guilt.

But she could not deny the triumph it gave her. With all the other's beauty and advantages, her culture, her exquisite clothes, he had eyes for her—for little Hilda. There was no denying it. In the lambent knowledge of the attraction, the girl's fresh comeliness blossomed into something akin to beauty.

One night as the two stood together in the theater, waiting for Miss Schuyler, Forbes dared to put into words the approval that had been glowing in his eyes.

"You actually dazzle me tonight!" he said, half laughingly, yet with an undertone that sent its thrill of sincerity.

Hilda's eyes were pools of light. Her lips budded.

"Oh, but I am not so dazzling as—as her!" she retorted, intensely conscious.

"As who?" he asked lightly.

Hilda looked at him. "You ought to know," she stammered.

"I haven't the slightest idea."

"You—you are engaged to her—aren't you?" She had blurted it out, in her uncontrolled eagerness to know.

Comprehension lighted his face.

"Oh," he observed, with a deep drawn breath, "that is entirely a misapprehension."

All during the play she was conscious of his eyes, fixed on her with that shining gaze.

That was the night she dreamed that he came to see her without Miss Schuyler. If it really occurred, she told herself next morning, it would prove beyond a doubt that he had meant it, that he really cared.

It was a mad dream, but madder things had been. She thought of all the actual cases—the Cinderellas in modern life, girls who, through startling marriages, had leaped at a bound from poverty to wealth. Hilda had a scrap book filled with all the stories. She got it out and read feverishly until noon. At one o'clock a large, smart box came from a fashionable florist's. The girl, with frantic fingers, unfastened the cords.

She uttered a cry when she saw the lavish gift of violets. Her eyes blurred so that she could scarcely decipher the name on the card. And when she had read it, she took the violets with her to her own room and shut the door. There she sat for a full half hour in the presence of the flowers, now pressing their divine coolness against her hot cheek, again holding them off at arm's length to look at them, then burying her face in them utterly, while the world spun round and round.

It was a little after three when a knock sounded at the sitting room door and Hilda opened it, to see Forbes standing there—alone. She was at once covered with an embarrassment so painful that for several seconds she stood facing him without a word.

"I—I haven't done much work," she began, when she had found her tongue. "The whole morning went before I—I haven't any report to make—"

"You needn't trouble about that," he assured her, with his quiet smile. "I didn't come to talk business. I came—just to see you. That is, if you have no objection."

She sat down, frightened, awkward. Now that her dream was coming true, she was afraid to look in its blinding face.

She felt how wretchedly out of place he was, sitting amid these surroundings. Every moment the dingy walls grew closer and closer. Her two small brothers kept thrusting their tousled heads through the door, till shame overwhelmed her.

Forbes, with ready tact, took in the situation.

"Shall we walk?" he suggested.

They strolled for an hour, first through Madison Square, then on to Fifth Avenue. Hilda's embarrassment only increased. She was afraid to meet his eyes, afraid to talk. Every time her companion turned the conversation to herself she trembled away from the subject. For safety, she talked of Mrs. Preston Stevens.

It was when she reverted to the letters that Forbes spoke of something he had apparently intended to mention before.

"By the way, there is one thing that troubles me, Miss Schuyler and I talked of it the first time you told us about your having rescued those letters. I said nothing that night, for I didn't wish to belittle your achievement, but—"

"Why—didn't I do right? You don't think—"

Hilda turned her eyes fully on him in frank dismay.

"Well, it rather worries me to think that— Didn't it ever occur to you that Mrs. Stevens might have missed them and been terribly distressed all this while, not knowing where they were? You see—"

"Oh, but I did intend to give them to her—just so quick as she come back. I was keeping them just for that. I—Good gracious!" She stopped abruptly in her walk. "I never thought of it that way before!"

And truly, until this moment, it had not occurred to her.

The whole truth rushed over her—how negligent she must have seemed, how indifferent, after all, to the interests of Mrs. Stevens. In spite of her anxiety to do the right thing, she had blundered fearfully.

"Oh, dear!" she bewailed. "Gracious!"

"Oh, come—it isn't so bad as that. You shouldn't worry so—"

"But I can't help it," panted the girl. "I can't rest now till it is all set straight. If I could get the address—"

"We have the address and can give it to you at any time, so put it all out of your mind."

But Hilda could think of nothing now but the letters. She smarted under the realization that her new friends even for a moment questioned the wisdom of her actions regarding Mrs. Stevens and was eager to prove to them her real motives.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," she insisted. "We'll go back now and get the letters and take them to the express office right away. I would be most crazy if I thought I make trouble for her."

She was as good as her word. When they had reached the house, she went at once in search of the box, while Forbes entertained himself with the family photograph album.

When she returned, she saw that he had selected a photograph of her and was gazing at it intently. He looked up, with a conscious flush, as she entered.

"I—I like this picture of you," he said. "I like it extremely."

"The one on the wall is better," she replied, glowing beneath his look.

She stood breathless, waiting. "If he really cares," she said to herself, trembling, "if he really means anything serious, he will ask for my picture. That is what proves a man's intentions. That is what *proves*."

Suddenly, turning from the picture on the wall, he spoke. "Do you know—I'd like awfully well to have one of those photographs." He stammered it, like any schoolboy, and blushed as red as she.

"I'll—I'll bring you one of mine the next time I come, if you'll give me yours."

But when she had given it to him, self-consciousness overwhelmed her. To hide it she began hastily to wrap the box of letters she had brought.

"Let me help you." He was by her side in an instant. She thrilled at his ready gallantry. It was always so—

he never failed, even in the slightest thing.

"You haven't said," he whispered, "that you want my picture. Won't you say it, Hilda?"

For answer she let her eyes drink to the full of his.

Her hands fumbled over the box. "If you give me the address, I can take it. Or perhaps—" She hesitated to ask a favor.

Forbes, alert to anticipate her littlest wish, himself offered to do the errand.

"Good-bye—till next time." He held her hand till it hurt. But the pain was joy.

Miss Schuyler had promised to come the next afternoon and Hilda was disappointed when a note arrived instead, stating that the visit must be postponed because of an unusual rush of work. Forbes would come later, the girl was certain.

As the afternoon wore on and he did not come, she concluded that evening would bring him. But evening passed without him.

All the next day she listened for a messenger or a florist's wagon or some evidence, some explanation. But the hours dragged by without another word from either of her newfound companions.

They had been overwhelmed with work, Hilda assured herself. By nature loyal, she had no thought of blame for them.

Two days more—and not a single message, not even a postal. A week went by and Hilda, alarmed at last, called up the telephone number Miss Schuyler had given her in case of emergency. But it was the number of a commercial house. Even in that, it seemed that she had blundered.. Why had she not listened care fully when it was given her?

And after all, she did not have Miss Schuyler's house address.

Hilda was certain that in some way illness or harm had come to her friends. It was this that tortured her, with the knowledge that she had no way to reach them.

Walking one day near Madison Square Garden, the memory of that last afternoon came back with a rush of sweetness and pain.

The boys were calling afternoon papers. She paused at the newsstand on the corner, for it was here she always purchased. A name, flung forth in large black type, caught her glance at once—

MRS. PRESTON STEVENS.

Then she caught another word—DIVORCE.

"It's out, then!" she said with a quick pang of pity for her former mistress. "It's out about the divorce—Miss Schuyler said it was coming."

She could scarcely wait to take the paper from the dealer's hand. "Poor Mrs. Stevens—" She pushed on toward the park, where she could sit and read. "It's *too* bad—"

She stopped short, with a strange, guttural cry. Another name had leaped—

HILDA GERTZ.

She read it and reread it her brain still stunned from the blow.

HILDA GERTZ, FORMER MAID OF MRS. STEVENS, TELLS WHOLE STORY OF SCARZA'S ALLEGED INFATUATION.

She stumbled. The whole landscape, with its trees and buildings, the park, the benches, went out in a swift blot of black. Consciousness conquered. She picked herself up dazedly, and went on, clutching the paper. Then it was she saw her picture—her own picture—flashed across the page.

"Why it's—it's the same one—the same one—"

Realization, swift as a sword, plunged, straight and relentless, red to the hilt with her suffering.

She found a bench and sank upon it. Her eyes did not leave the print.

ADmits SHE WAS GO-BETWEEN—TOOK LETTERS BACK AND FORTH—SCARZA'S LOVE LETTERS PRODUCED.

And there were the letters, column after column.

Hilda, blind and deaf to all else, read on. Dusk came and found her still sit-

ting there. Once only she lifted her voice:

"Oh—I didn't know—I didn't know there was in this world—people so cruel as that! I didn't think people *could*—"

Speech snapped. Her teeth were chattering. The chill that gripped her struck to the marrow.

Not many blocks away, in a gay little café, Grace Todd, alias Miss Schuyler, and Bert Tenny, once known as Forbes, were "celebrating."

"We beat 'em all—we beat 'em all! Whew! But wasn't it a clean-up? Rath will raise the bonus to one hundred. He told me so today."

Miss Todd, star writer of the *Whirlwind*, sighed a huge sigh of elation. "Wasn't it great?" she triumphed. "We've got every other sheet in town crazy over the stunt. I can see them now, tearing their hair to know how we did it. How do you suppose Rath ever got on to the clue?"

"Give it up. He's a wonder, is Rath. But, say!" Tenny doubled up at a side splitting remembrance. "Did you hear about the *Rocket*? Ha, ha! The only others who got wind of the Gertz folks had to get it wrong. They thought the former maid lived in Philadelphia. Sent Webb over there, and he's wandering around the Quaker City yet. Gee! I can see Webb's expense account."

"They say the *Planet* fired two of their reporters—they've been working on this thing for five months. Say! Can't you see the sickly green tinge of the *Planet's* complexion when our first edition came up?"

Miss Todd sighed again. "But do you know, I feel awfully sorry about that little girl. It actually hurt me!"

"Oh, slush! You'll never be any good at this game if you get soft-hearted. Cheer up!"

Miss Todd flicked a shining something from her eyelash. "She was falling in love with you, Bert. She was, really!"

Tenny blew a disgusted breath of cigarette smoke. "Please don't insult me!" he said.

OTHER WOMEN'S HUSBANDS

By PHILIPPA LYMAN

CARLOTTA blew in, her cheeks like roses, and threw off her furs, as she curled up in a big chair before the fire and asked for her tea.

"My dear," she said as she stirred the sugar in vigorously, "I've been calling on some people from 'Frisco at the Plaza, and I've met the most attractive man I've ever seen!"

Being quite accustomed to Carlotta's enthusiasms, it was with genuine interest that I queried, "Married or single?"

Carlotta set down her teacup and gave me a reproachful look from her big, brown eyes, as she said: "Polly, I said *attractive*."

"Attractive"—synonym for "married," as it is thus inscribed in the Spinster's Thesaurus. "Confined to the sterner sex. Verb, to attract."

"Attractive"—even as the proverbial child weeps for possession of the moon and Aesop's fabled fox for the grapes so tantalizingly purple just out of reach above his pointed nose, so does a married man appeal to the spinster—as well as to married women dissatisfied with their own liege lords, and to the gay divorcée, eager for fresh conquests and new scalps at her belt but not yet ready to assume new and legitimate burdens.

Yes, that is just the proper word—"attractive." Perhaps not handsome, especially talented or clever, but possessed instead of that fascinating degree of ugliness, that innate goodness of heart and manliness and the protecting air that renders him vastly more alluring than the bachelor who challenges your admiration for his good looks, brightens you with his cleverness and bores you with the egotism which he is sure to possess.

"Other Women's Husbands!" How every married woman will figuratively prick up her ears when she reads that, and wonder whether I mean *her* husband, or some other woman's—and if so, whose? While I am laughing in my Irish crochet sleeve over the fact that very likely I mean both, and some others to boot, of whom she has never even heard.

Do not think, gentle—or ungentle—reader, that I am a vampire, scheming to get possession of your husband, for I am not. I am simply one of many, many thousands of the same type, with the same ideas, environment, experience—and, if you will, attractions—of an unmarried young person of thirty who feels sufficiently old not to waste her time upon noneligos and quite young enough to feel that fate holds something yet in store for her. There are thousands like me in every metropolis, hundreds in every city, and no town is so small, so remote and obscure, that at least one of me does not remain to tantalize—unconsciously, perhaps—her married sisters and to make some poor devil wish he were married to me instead of "*her*," as he finds too late that we have seemingly so much more in common with each other.

Popular sentiment, I admit, will be against me at the start. But the married men—bless them—the "other women's husbands," *they* will understand; that is one thing I can count upon. Why is it that a wife may be ever so lavish in praise of her husband, but the moment some other woman admires his sterling qualities, immediately becomes suspicious? One of the Spinster's Proverbs reads: "Pour not your admiration for

married men into the ears of their wives; save it for those of the men." For, if you admire John's verses, comment upon his athletic figure or praise his cleverness in the market, you are immediately suspected of designs upon him. Very likely his wife calls those exquisite lyrics "trash," sneers at his daily tramp home from the office, which he takes to keep in condition while other pasty-faced men are gliding by in their motor cars, and takes no interest in his financial worries so long as her bills are promptly paid and her allowance kept up to its figure—a figure that makes many little economies necessary to him in order that she may have needless luxuries.

Have you ever noticed how pathetic is the pleasure of some married man at receiving some little word of appreciation? The man does not live who does not crave them—but some, alas! never hear them by their own firesides. The most tragic thing in a man's life, it seems to me, is the having taken as a matter of course everything that he does, from the adding of a few thousands to his income to planning some unexpected pleasure trip or buying a new motor car. A woman always finds fault if he fails to accomplish these things, but how often does she remember to be grateful that he does?

Some man has said—and many have echoed his sentiments—that the most attractive woman in the world is an unmarried good-looking woman between thirty and forty—providing her spinsterhood has not soured her disposition. A woman at that age has usually acquired a certain poise, has kept her person exquisitely groomed and her wits sharpened. Cares of the household have not deterred her from keeping up to date in plays and books and music, and even though she may be a breadwinner, she is more than likely to have found time to acquire some accomplishments which will make her sought after; occasionally she even has that rare one of being a good listener—and every man will agree with me that that, of all feminine accomplishments, is quite the most charming. The man has never seen her with

her hair screwed into "natural wavers" or pouring the coffee in a soiled dressing gown, but naturally sees only her best side. She, too, has another side—but what does it matter since only she herself knows it?

When a maid arrives at the age of twenty-five, from then until forty let her buckle on her strongest armor and take up her spear well sharpened for the fray. She will need them—for it is during that inclusive period that she is most dangerously attractive to men, especially to married men. She becomes their legitimate prey, and neither cotton in her ears nor bandages over her eyes will keep from her the unwelcome knowledge. Unwelcome? Yes; for every nice girl shrinks at first from the undisguised admiration of a married man, looks upon it as a downward step from her pedestal and feels intuitively that, even though it may not be invited or encouraged, it is like a blot upon the fair white pages of her Book of Life.

And somehow it always continues to be a shock—to me, at least. I have often wondered how other girls felt about it—those who do not flaunt their conquests brazenly. For they come, I think, into the lives of most girls, these waifs of love straying from other women's husbands. However, I have never learned, for that is one of the few subjects women do not discuss together. But as one grows older, that secret shame is rather overshadowed by other and varying emotions, which include the keener sympathy with men, that fatal pity so akin to love—and sometimes—oh, the sorrow of it—even love itself, which comes like a poor unwelcome child, to be warmed at the very heart that would steel itself against the intruder.

One may strive never so hard to protect herself from the interest of other women's husbands, but somehow, like the unexpected, it usually happens. Girls living the sheltered life of home, protected and shielded, are no more immune from it than girls who, out in the big, beautiful world, rub elbows with genius and are pitted against men of brains and brawn in the struggle for this high-priced existence of ours. In

the little sleepy town among the hills, where women wear one bonnet for five seasons, and where men seem to have but two topics of conversation—crops and the weather—or in the crowded city street, one finds those husbands of other women with hungry hearts and souls that have been seared with suffering. There is something in the air, the spirit of the times, that seems to make such a state inevitable, irrespective of geography. The conventions of a century ago seem to have been uprooted, and although we are secretly apprehensive of the vague unrest that haunts us, there is in it an exhilaration, an intoxication if you will, that makes us revel in the uncertainty of it and anxiously await the next move on this great chessboard of ours, where pawns and kings stand side by side awaiting the next move of fate. It is a feeling akin to watching bubbles rise in the stem of a champagne glass, when we feel upon our lips the tang of the wine even before we raise the glass.

In that world of other women's husbands with whom the spinster may be thrown in her own work, one meets many—and such men! The American man in all his glory, men such as no other nation can show, big, brawny, brainy and bonny, resourceful, keenly aggressive, decisive, yet gentle, deferential and considerate of the women whom he meets in his daytime world. The Van Bibbers and the Gibson men are all drinking tea at the Plaza with the "other women," strolling down the Avenue or watching the world and his wife roll by in their broughams and limousines from their club windows—but they have no place here, these useless bachelors. There are bachelors downtown, too, many of them. But somehow, those whom I meet seem crude and uninformed in comparison with the "other women's husbands," immature and untactful. Back in my little country village I used to assist the Plymouth Rock hen with the hatching of her chicks, picking off little bits of shell from the round balls of feathers and helping in my clumsy way that the chick might get its bearings. I am

always wanting, figuratively, to poke off a bit of shell here and there from the bachelors of my acquaintance and watch them get their eyes open—the poor things are so blind where women are concerned.

The interesting and delightful men are all married. I found that out years ago, about the same time I discovered that none of the eligible men of my acquaintance would ever do as husbands. It has made me wonder if good husbands are born and not made, or whether it is the refining influence of the "other women" in their lives that has made them so adorable. Very likely that is it—or else they had good mothers who began their education before they were born. Or is it—I shrink from saying it—is it that we women have become imbued with that same thirst for the unattainable that from time immemorial has been the undoing of men? Are the good old days when a husband and wife had no thought for anyone on earth but one another really gone, and is everyone discontented and groaning under his matrimonial chains and fetters? Is the real reason why we attract or are attracted by other women's husbands that we are unattainable or forbidden? It cannot be true! There must be something less petty than the crying of the child for the moon behind it all—a something in our psychological or spiritual make-up that finds in the companionship of a new friend some need suddenly and satisfactorily filled. It is maddening to search through one's brain cells for excuse or justification for an attraction, and find nothing more satisfying to our consciences than the timeworn theosophical theory of reincarnation. I do not scout the idea that I met a congenial soul in some prehistoric cliff or cave, in Athens or on the banks of the Nile, for it is a pleasant one, this coming together again and feeling at once that indescribable something that denotes understanding, the quick sympathy and the feeling that with him words are superfluous. Those are the souls that stand the test of silences, that require no explanations.

Is this a digression? Back, then, to

the husbands, the "other women's husbands," and the part they play in the life of every bachelor maid! Very young are we when we begin to notice the change marriage brings in a man's life. Perhaps it is the nice young chap who marries our dearest friend, and we see him change gradually from a careless, happy-go-lucky individual to a man of the world weighted down under responsibilities—a serious, sober man, aged before his years and from whom all the old spontaneous gaiety and high spirits have been driven by doubt and distrust. And we notice, also, that if we continue the same air of frank *camaraderie* which before his marriage always characterized our friendship—a friendship which began when we were trundled side by side in our baby carriages—the young wife becomes very cool and at times even snippy. You suddenly wake up and find that if your friendship in that family is to continue, you must alter the entire course of your communion with it and adopt a reserve quite foreign to your nature, even to the point of taciturnity. You must always side with the wife in event of the inevitable squabbles which always seem to arise in the best regulated families, and conceal whatever interest you may feel in the man and his affairs—in short, by an unnatural, constrained and artificial attitude, destroy a nice old friendship of the boy and girl, and if it is continued at all, you do so from a detached position, perched high on a wall of reserve and self-consciousness.

And all the time the better part of us is wailing out in protest, "Why? Oh, why?" Why, indeed? Why cannot the wife be content in her possession to allow the old mutual friendship to continue sweetly and naturally, or not at all? It is not the husband's fault that the situation has become strained; it is the fault of the wife with her poor, narrow, petty little soul, who, because her husband is so eminently desirable to her, thinks he must appeal in exactly the same way to every other woman.

Do not think me a traitor to my sex, nor that I blame the woman always, for this is not true. My sympathy goes out

to her, even though she herself creates the miserable conditions that drive her husband from her to seek sympathy and understanding elsewhere. But in most cases which have come under my notice during the past few years, the blame is directly traceable to the woman—even after having heard her side of the story with its inevitable "two sides."

Oh, you women! I can see you as you read this, drawing your lips together in a thin, prim line as you shake your heads and say with conviction: "No good woman will ever put herself in a position to receive confidences from another woman's husband, nor to hear declarations of love from him. She will turn her back upon such temptations." At least, the "other women" will, while, ten to one, they are trying to smother the uprising of a guilty conscience as they remember against their wills past extravagances or barred doors to their hearts, denying their husbands shelter therein. They do not seem to know that, after all, it is to a good woman that a man turns when his heart is breaking, when he has come to the parting of the ways. He seeks blindly for her who can supply the sympathy for which his poor starved soul is craving, and who can pour the healing balm of understanding upon the gaping wound in his heart.

I have discovered that "other women's husbands" have a slogan. This is it: "My wife and I have nothing in common with each other." Once it used to surprise me; now I await it, knowing always that it will not fail me. And pity 'tis, 'tis true. Very likely the woman's, if she were to acknowledge one, would be: "My husband doesn't understand me." Oh, the tragedy of it! If only the poor souls did not have to marry in order to find it out! But the eager young lover who anticipates her every want during the halcyon days of courtship and the honeymoon, fails, as soon as they are "settled," to "understand." Settled? I call it "unsettled."

I may be mistaken, but it always seems to me that people who had to marry in order to find out one another's

incapacity for understanding or that they had absolutely nothing in common must be all wrong and woefully lacking in discernment. Still, there is that dear old argument to clinch the situation that "people always show their best side before marriage." As I have never been married, of course I cannot speak with authority; the only reason I mention this, anyway, is because I want to be fair to the "other woman"—I am so sorry for her. Every time another woman's husband kicks over the matrimonial traces and comes to pour out his sorrows at my feet, I try mentally to put myself in his wife's position and to judge fairly. I picture her at her forsaken fireside, dabbing at her eyes with a moist handkerchief and looking all forlorn. But, as a matter of fact, she is probably flirting with some admirer, losing her allowance at bridge or perhaps sitting in a palm-screened corner of the Plaza tea room, drinking simultaneously the strains of Franko's passionate music, the Plaza's best brand of Ceylon and the ardent admiration that shines from the eyes of some other woman's husband—of whom her own husband, very likely, has never even heard. As Oscar Wilde said so pithily, "when a woman loses her husband's love, she either becomes very dowdy or else takes to wearing very smart bonnets that some other woman's husband has to pay for." And he might have added: "And usually does the latter first," for in my limited observation, the first step down from the wife's pedestal is usually taken voluntarily.

There is a bright side to these friendships with "other women's husbands"—a delightful side to us poor spinsters who are so alone in the world. For a spinster may have a friendship with another woman's husband that is altogether satisfying and helpful and stimulating to her best ambitions. In point of fact, though convention has decreed that they must either be open and above-board and shared by the wife or discreetly secret from the eyes of the world, they may mean much to the maid and to the man, with never a hint of anything but *camaraderie* and helpfulness

and the supplying of some particular need which could be supplied by no one else.

"Other women," does it please you to know that your husbands are as jealously exacting of our good names and honor as they are of your own? That oftentimes the protection and friendship of a married man saves us from something worse—a marriage, perhaps, with one of his sex whom he knows to be unworthy, a hasty step in the wrong direction here because of woman's inevitable trustfulness in the opposite sex and her inability to discriminate between the wolf and the sheep, or an indiscretion of some sort that would leave its lasting mark? Do you know that the advice of your husbands is given because of the dear, dead fathers or the brothers whom we never had? They stand in their places, these husbands of yours, and protect us as far as they are able and keep us from making mistakes that are being made every day by inexperienced spinsters. They help us with our poor little investments; they give of their wise counsel, and in many cases they listen patiently to our own love tangles or heartbreaks and tell us from a man's standpoint how we may best solve the perplexing problems that beset us. We women are such poor dependable and foolish creatures! Most of us know some married man to whom we turn intuitively for advice and assistance in time of crisis, if we have no fathers or brothers of our own. And there are women who, learning of this, immediately seek to pry for the ulterior motive which their narrow minds tell them must exist. This type is rather disappointed than otherwise if she finds her husband guiltless of intrigue or smirching her "honor." She cannot conceive a frank, free friendship between her husband and another woman, and the woman, in her eyes, must be scheming to gain her husband's affections.

She does not know, poor thing, that very likely that is farthest from his thoughts. For when a married man is made miserable in any one of the several ways in vogue at the present time, he does not allow himself to bounce

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from the frying pan into the fire without long and careful reflection. "Love goes where it is sent," and the more opposition he meets with, so much stronger do his affections become if they are finally lavished upon another woman. But men are less prone to tear up the matrimonial foundations than their poor misunderstood wives, through their innate hatred of scandal and the publicity of the divorce court.

When a woman sorrows she takes refuge in tears and has a good cry, with perhaps a little hysteria thrown in, but a man takes things more quietly—more sanely; though even I have felt hot tears burning upon my hand, reached out in sympathy to some man going through a big crisis in his life. The average man wants to turn to a sympathetic friend with whom he can talk his troubles out, and in nine cases out of ten, that friend is a woman—a woman whom he admires and respects long before this turn in the wheel brings him to her feet at last, perhaps confessed as her lover.

When I see a really happy and devoted couple, I say, "Thank God," for in my circle of acquaintances there seem to be five unhappy ones to every one who is happy. And in trying to get to the root of the marital infelicity, I have found that, as a rule, it all begins with the wife's expecting her husband to sever all ties of friendship, to ignore especially any friends of the gentler sex whom he may have had before his marriage to her. She wants him all to herself, poor thing, and she generally has him—for a while. But the restraint upon his freedom is certain to become irksome, the fetters galling to his pride and the petticoat tyranny just a little more than he can bear patiently. Men are never, I think, quite past the "little boy" stage, when the thing which they are told they must not do seems the only really desirable thing to do. Whether it is jam on the closet shelf, a forbidden swimming hole or a comradeship with some girl he used to know before he met Her—it has its attraction, and if there is any way in which he can evade detection and punishment he is sure to have

it. Or perhaps he does it defiantly, and awaits his punishment in the same mood. Are such punishments, I wonder, ever effectual?

I think if I ever marry I shall strive to overcome that jealousy which we all have, and to give my liege lord his freedom so far as is compatible with married life. He would probably take it, anyway—and if it be not forbidden, would it mean as much? Every woman wants her husband for herself and resents the coming into his life or the retention of other women friends, innocent though they may be. But would it not be easier in the end if she recognized at the start his right to his own choice of friends, even as she asserts her own? And would not the zest of forbidden fruit lose its sweetness if permission were given to pluck it from the tree?

One may love but one person—at a time. But he or she may *like* many. I once confessed to a married man that platonic streak in my nature and my capacity for being very fond of many men at the same time yet without being what the world is pleased to term "fickle." Of course, this is far from the one great passion of our lives—but shall I tell you of his written answer?

This is his letter:

I have lived for a good many years in the way expressed in that thought—in secret, of course, since society and personal obligations compelled me to live that way if at all. But it is the only correct philosophy for the times. More than that, it is the foundation of ninety per cent of the marital unhappiness, this silly, hopeless idea that when one life joins another it must give up the fifteen friends to whom it has been linked for years by fifteen different interests, one of which was represented by each friend. I should be sorry, indeed, if I felt that I represented to any friend of mine so much that he or she could give up all other friends without a sigh for my sake. I should feel that the one who gave them all up for me alone could have but little real breadth of view or versatility of interest.

What do you think, "other woman"? Is your husband so much to you that you are willing to merge yourself so in him that you have not an interest aside from his? And are you unwilling that he should have friends who can give him something that you cannot give? Who is so clever, so omniscient, as to pre-

sume to say: "There is no need of his I cannot fill"?

A married man I know is passionately fond of music; his wife loathes it and is unwilling for him to hear an opera or attend a concert without her—she will not go with him, nor is there music in their own home, where a beautiful piano stands forever closed. Another, who comes home tired after a day's work, confesses a liking for a cocktail before dinner. His wife is seriously opposed to it, forbids it, in fact. So he drops in at the club on his way home and has, not only one, but three or four more as well. Which is better? Another man, who works strenuously by day, likes an occasional quiet evening at home with his pipe and book—but his wife feels aggrieved if an evening is ever left unprovided for, and drags him off to bridge parties and plays and receptions without ceasing; she never reads anything outside the society columns or fashion magazines. One man I know is unhappy because his wife threw a plate at him and cut his forehead when he told her gently that she must be a little more careful about her bills, which amounted to almost as much as his entire salary. Another one is the victim of such utter selfishness as one seldom sees—a selfishness which extends even to their children; on the verge of a financial crisis, she will not economize nor stem the tide of her extravagance one iota, nor does she interest herself in his life save to complain that he seems not to be able to make as much money as he once did. And there are many more. I have also investigated the wails of the unhappy wife; but I have not found a single instance where the man had taken the first step. She was unhappy because Mrs. Smith's limousine was better than hers; because she could not go to Palm Beach and must do with one maid less during his financial troubles; because she had only a fifth of his salary for her personal allowance; because she did not like her husband's men friends; because she did not want to have his invalid sister occupy rooms in the same house with them—when she had no home, no other resource than her doting brother.

Oh, you "other women," the subject is inexhaustible! But would you ever understand, I wonder, why your husbands turn to us, crave our friendship and even our love? For love and sympathy are hand in hand, and the poor starved soul of the "other woman's husband" must have some outlet for the big heartful of affection that God gave to him. If it is repulsed in one direction, it is sure to find outlet in another. And can the heart hungry spinsters be blamed that occasionally his choice falls upon them? They do not seek it—they do not want it, this love of another woman's husband. They do not want to break up any home, happy or unhappy. They do not want your cast-off husbands, be they never so fair. While they are waiting for the right man to come into their lives, perhaps even at the point where they despair of ever finding him, along comes some "other woman's husband," starving for just what she is yearning to give, and two empty hearts come together with a blinding, deafening crash, and are filled each with the other—another tragedy!

While a woman cannot help feeling complimented at the love of a good man, it saddens her to think that even though it might be mutual, nothing could come of it without the stigma of divorce—if at all. None of the "other women's husbands" who have loved me have ever asked me to run away with them, nor have they offered me anything beside genuine respect and love—at least, I like to think it was genuine love while it lasted, for time is the great healer of all wounds of the heart, and by this time I think most of them have recovered from their unrequited affection.

Oh, "other women's husbands"! There are so many of you, and you suffer so, my heart goes out to you all—because—because I love one of you.

It is but fair to confess now that I, too, am in love—and with another woman's husband. And this is my punishment—how you women will laugh when you hear this and say it serves me right—I seldom see him, and I do not know if the love which he once confessed for me still survives. But about

my own—there is no mistake. His story is much the same as that of many “other women’s husbands.” His two little children have a devoted mother—but he has no wife! Other worshipers at her shrine there are, for she is very beautiful and very clever. But he is but a wage earner whose duty it is to keep the family coffers well filled and ready for her extravagant inroads upon them. He, too, has told me his life tragedy; his tears have I felt burning upon my hands and his lips upon mine. Yes, his lips thrilling mine in a last kiss that held very much of heaven in its renunciation, even though we must turn back from the gates and walk by separate paths—where, we knew not. But that I was able to give him a few moments of happiness out of the long years of sorrow and misunderstanding I have always thanked God. It is something to remember in the long, long years that are ahead—years which must be spent without him, without even the consolation of an occasional letter. And to make it harder, I do see him at long intervals, quite by accident, always in the presence of others, and if we talk it is in the most conventional manner—but alone again in each other’s arms we must never be, for the sake of the little children and his vows to that “other woman,” to whom he is the most loyal and faithful of husbands, even while she has broken his big, warm heart. But in that communion of souls which I believe possible to all who truly love and to which space is no barrier, I have come to feel that in spirit he is mine. That he is so big in giving his life to spare others from unhappiness by any seeming disloyalty is one reason why I love him. He plays his part, and plays it well, never forgetting his lines, never missing a cue.

As for the “other woman”—I do not pity her; I try, knowing what I do, not to despise her. But that I have felt her husband’s lips upon my own I deny to be a wrong to her, who turns from him to the caresses of other men. For one brief hour I feasted upon crumbs flung from her table—but now they lie untouched. He is the one man toward whom I could ever feel as I have done—as I do—for among all others who have come into my life he stands apart, everything a man should be, yet lacking none of the attractions or attainments that seem to make him to all women who know him alluring in every way, compelling their admiration, commanding their respect—and, I fear, their love; for I am certain that others than myself who know the sadness of his life—if they are like me—condemn the “other woman”—and condone him.

Oh, “other women’s husbands,” one might write a book upon you! The subject is ever new, engrossing, fascinating, instructive—what you will. I do not forget that other type—the man who does not appreciate his wife. But the “other women”—God rest their souls in the life to come for the sorrow they have caused upon earth!

While the wives may fail you, husbands of other women, *we* do not, we others to whom you turn in your sorrow and despair. We give your poor starved souls a right to expression, for we know the sweetness of confession, the agony of repression and the suffering in secret sorrow that finds no outlet in words.

“Other women,” condemn if you will this frank criticism of yourselves, for there are those who will understand to the bottoms of their big, warm hearts—your husbands!



THE Exodus of love begins with Revelations.

FLAVIA DRIVES

By SIGMUND SPAETH

FLAVIA and I are engaged. At least, we were engaged yesterday and so far Flavia hasn't called me up today to tell me that we have parted forever. Of course, we are completely in love with each other—that is to say, I am with Flavia. She claims to be just as much so with me—at times; I mean she emphasizes the fact at times. Of course, her love is perpetual and unceasing, a restless current which sweeps ever onward; that's the way she describes it when we are making up. At other times she wonders how she could ever have made such a mistake. I usually keep silent, having no explanation to offer, and it's all the more satisfactory afterward, when, in her exaggerated repentant mood, she tells me that I must *never* take her seriously when she is saying "all those horrid things," and that it's only what she's saying *now* that counts. So I split the difference and strike an acceptable average. It never pays to take a girl at her word when she is at either of the extremes of emotion.

Flavia is an attractive creature. That's a mild way of putting it, but, of course, I'm engaged to her, and I like to apply the same rule to myself that I would to anyone else. If I attempted a real description of her I'd get enthusiastic immediately, and then you would probably skip that part, with a pitying and bored smile, or else you would look up her picture and wonder if the artist hadn't really flattered her, after all. But I forgot; there won't be any picture with this story, so you'll really have to depend on what I tell you about her. Well, I'll content myself with calling her merely an attractive

creature. From the viewpoint of the world, she would be called one of those girls who always seem to wear the right thing at the right time. Of course, there's a good deal more to Flavia than her clothes. She always manages to fix her hair just right. It's a fluffy brown kind. She says she can't do *anything* with it, especially when it's just been washed. But results prove that she can do *everything* with it, next to actually taking it off. It isn't necessary for me to mention Flavia's tilted little nose, nor her good, straight mouth and firm chin. You'll see those when she begins to talk. But she has a pair of eyes. If you took away all the rest of Flavia, those eyes would still be enough to build up a new girl on. There's no limit to the things that I, being a careful observer, can see in Flavia's eyes. But they never really satisfy my curiosity. That's why I'm going to marry Flavia—just to let her keep me guessing the rest of my life.

As to Flavia's name, I admit that it is rather peculiar. And it's apt to give you a wrong impression of her. When you hear it for the first time you expect to find the owner a tall, sedate, distinguished sort of person, of the Roman matron type, extremely ideal and unapproachable. But when you come to know Flavia you find that she isn't any of those things. Not that she can't be dignified upon occasions—and play the part beautifully, too—but that merely shows her adaptability. To me it doesn't seem natural, and it always gives me an uncomfortable feeling, the same as when she now and then calls me Richard instead of plain Dick. I don't believe Flavia is particularly

fond of her own name. She thinks it's silly and pedantic and story bookish. Personally, I think it's a very pretty name. It carries with it the impression of sunlight and shadow and sylvan dells and dancing dryads and all those cool, neat, artistic things. But it's just as easy to call her "Dearest," which she likes best—because she *is*, you know—except in public, of course.

It was a long time ago that I first met Flavia—at least a month, I should think. Of course, I didn't know she was Flavia then; she was just a girl. It seems to be a custom with writers to speak about their characters in vague, noncommittal terms, even though everybody knows exactly who they are, or rather are going to be. So I'll speak of Flavia for the present merely as "the girl," and be perfectly conventional. Flavia says she likes that trait in me—that I'm so conventional. She says it's so annoying to have people answer wrongly, just to be original. She can always depend upon *me* to react in the most natural way.

But I must tell you how we met. It was late in the summer. I was spending my two weeks of vacation in a little seaside resort. The name of the town isn't important. They're all alike. I think the Lord intended seaside resorts to be beautiful and more or less individual. But man has changed all that to suit himself and has leveled everything to a "standard style." The town of which I am speaking had the usual bathing beach, "longest, widest, hardest and safest in the country," the usual "palace hotels," the usual pier and cheap amusement places and the usual dusty roads and disreputable native population.

One afternoon, a hot, sleepy, uninteresting afternoon, as I remember it, I was on the point of entering one of those old curiosity shops that are the curse of summer resorts. I don't know what I was going to buy. It isn't important. But just as I was about to enter the store there was a sudden clatter, a roar of wheels and of hoofs, and a hubbub of yells. "Runaway! Wild horse! Stop him! She'll

be killed!" You can always depend upon the average crowd, in moments of supreme excitement, to stand around and give expression to the obvious. It was a runaway, sure enough, a big, black horse, enveloped in a cloud of dust, and on the dead run. Behind it, and bouncing up and down on the rough road, was a break cart, one of those high thrones on wheels, where you have to sit up very straight so as not to overbalance the horse. In the cart was a girl—a very remarkable girl—the girl, you know. She was standing up and pulling on the reins with all her might. She looked like a young Diana in a Roman chariot race. That's a mixed metaphor, I know, but, anyway, she looked like it. I didn't have time to notice all that at the moment; it came to me later. The whole rig seemed to dash by before I could move. But I was whirled after it by some instinct or magnetic power, and before I knew it I had taken hold of the back of the cart and was pulling myself in, just the way I had learned it on the back end of the express wagons in my boyhood.

I climbed over the seat and started to take the reins from the hands of the goddess.

"Let me help you," I suggested politely.

She seemed not to be aware of my presence.

"Pardon me," said I, attempting to take the reins by force.

She turned her beautiful eyes upon me with a cold stare.

"Sir! I think you must have made a mistake!" very haughtily.

"You mean—"

"I don't remember having met you before."

"But—but," I stammered, "this is no time for ceremony. I assure you my intentions are honorable. I mean—you evidently need help."

"Excuse me; you are wrong. I like to drive rather fast."

She spoke with an effort to appear composed. But the horse was as much beyond her control as ever, and the violent jerks of the reins caused her

ridiculously polite sentences to be punctuated with gasps.

"I insist that you need help," said I in what was meant to be a masterful tone.

She burst forth into sudden fury.

"How dare you? What do you mean by climbing into my carriage? Get off immediately. No gentleman would insult a defenseless lady in this way!"

She stamped her little foot angrily and almost lost her balance in doing so.

"You are quite right," I answered humbly. "I'm *not* a gentleman. It was rude of me to interfere. But I'm here now, and you won't get rid of me until you give me those reins."

Her look would have annihilated me under ordinary circumstances.

"You mean to defy me?" she raged. "Are you going to insult me still further?"

"Call it what you like," I returned cheerfully. "But I intend to stop that horse before I leave you. Give me the reins."

"Never!" she flashed. "It's *my* horse, and they're *my* reins."

"Then I must take them," I answered angrily.

"You won't *dare!*" came back defiantly.

"For the last time, young lady, give me those reins."

"Never!"

Without another word I seized her hands. She proved stronger than I had expected, and there was a struggle. Rather than use violence, I merely added my strength to hers and put all my weight on the reins. The horse was still capering madly ahead. The yelling crowd had faded into the distance. There we stood, side by side, glaring at each other, and so, hand in hand, amid the clatter and the dust and the glare of the country road, we drove triumphantly out of that miserable village into an unknown land.

We went on for a time in silence. A few scattered farmhouses dashed by. A hen made desperate efforts to get under the horse's hoofs. A dog ran out

barking wildly, but soon gave up the chase. Suddenly the girl let go the reins and dropped into the seat with a half-sob. I was afraid she was going to cry, and lent all my energies to stopping the horse. Soon I felt a slackening in his pace. When I realized that I had gained control at last, I turned to look at the girl. She was staring at me resentfully.

"I hate you!" she said.

"Honored, I assure you, madam," I answered.

"Don't call me 'madam.' You are very rude."

"My humblest apologies," said I. "It was unintentional."

"I think I shall call a policeman," she suggested abruptly.

"Yes?" said I, scanning the countryside with interest. "It might be well. But you would probably find the policeman off duty at present. Besides, the horse is really doing very nicely now, thank you."

"There are other animals besides horses to be considered," she sneered.

I managed to remain calm. I had brought the horse down to a walk, and now I stopped him entirely.

"It will not be necessary for me to inflict my presence upon you any longer," I said with my most studied courtesy. "Thank you for a very pleasant drive."

I handed her the reins and descended to the ground.

"What are you going to do now?" she asked coldly.

"Oh, I think I'll take a little walk," I responded with forced gaiety. "That was my original intention."

"Don't prevaricate," she answered sharply. "You have put me into a very unpleasant position. But it is my duty to drive you back to town."

"By no means," said I. "My intentions may have been good, but they certainly place you under no such obligation."

"Your sarcasm is quite unnecessary," she retorted. "Whatever your intentions were, I insist that you get in again and drive back with me."

"Really," I laughed, "it would give

me the greatest pleasure to drive with you, but unfortunately I'm not going back to town just yet. I intend to take a stroll first."

"You are not only rude but untruthful," was her angry reply. "If you are ashamed to be seen with me, you may get out before we reach town."

"You mistake my motives," I rejoined. "It has been the greatest honor of my—"

"Oh, you are the most impossible person I have ever met! Why won't you do as I tell you?"

I smiled at her quizzically.

"Your wishes seem to vary somewhat," I said. "It is impossible to be consistently obedient."

"Do you mean to accuse me of inconsistency?" she flared. "You have no right to say that. I am nothing if not consistent."

"Very true," I assented. "Therefore you will not insist upon keeping me here any longer."

I turned to go, but she suddenly changed her tactics entirely.

"Don't you think it's rather inconsiderate of you to desert a lady in distress?" she suggested sweetly. "I may need your assistance, you know, and it's a long way to town."

I hadn't thought of it in that light.

"When people imagine that they have stopped runaway horses and things," she mused, "they usually make *sure* of the safety of their victims."

Her new move was exasperatingly effective—and she was quite irresistible when she wasn't angry. I looked at her questioningly.

"You really think that you will need an escort?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Very well, then," I answered, and jumped in.

She turned the horse around, declining my offer to take the reins, and we started homeward at a leisurely pace.

For a long time neither of us spoke. The sun was getting low in the west, and I busied myself with the beauties of the landscape. She, on the other

hand, seemed very solicitous regarding the horse's welfare, and paid strict attention to his interests. As for that animal himself, he walked stolidly onward, seemingly unconscious of any misdemeanor, but rather proud of a duty well done.

After what seemed an interminable silence, she spoke.

"I suppose it's hardly proper for us to talk until we have exchanged cards," she said hurriedly. "I haven't a card with me; my name is Fanning—Flavia Fanning."

"Thank you," said I, taking out my card and presenting it to her. She did not even give it a casual glance, and I felt as if I were a traveling salesman.

"Lovely day, isn't it?" she suggested sarcastically.

"Beautiful," I assented lamely.

There was another long pause. I began to wonder whether I couldn't possibly drop overboard quietly without her noticing it, when suddenly she began to speak in low, hurried tones.

"I can't imagine what could have possessed me to act as I've done. How can you possibly forgive me? I was abominably rude, disgustingly unladylike."

I was so astonished as to be unable to speak. But I tried to gasp out a reply.

"No, no," she continued. "Don't say a word. I know just exactly how bad I was. It was all my fault, too; you were a perfect gentleman all the time. It was good of you to want to help me. And—and—I have a confession to make. The horse *did* run away with me, and I was scared out of my wits. It's not my horse, at all. It's an old, ugly brute from the livery stable."

She gave him a revengeful flick of the whip. I tried again to put in a word, but she disregarded the interruption.

"I never drove this horse before," she went on. "But I have always been able to take care of myself. He shied at something or other, and before I knew it he was off. I wasn't

scared at first, only mad. Then pretty soon I knew that I couldn't hold him. And then you came. At first I was blind with rage at having to be helped, and I pretended to be conventional and rude, and then my stubborn devil got into me and I was rude—oh, awfully rude."

She was on the verge of tears. I hastily began to assure her that everything was all right.

"No, no," she insisted. "You'll never forgive me. I don't know what I meant by treating you that way. It was just perverseness. I didn't want you to go. I never was so thankful in my life as when you came. It was the bravest thing I ever saw. You were a hero. Yes, you were, a real hero. And you stuck to it, even when I insulted you. Yes, I did—I insulted you at least twice. But if you had gone I'd have been angrier still. And, anyway, you saved my life. I'll never forget that. And you were very nice not to want to drive back with me. But I made you, and then I was nastier than ever. And I knew who you were all the time. That's why I didn't look at your card. Then I remembered that it was rude, but I didn't care—until I began

to think. Then I realized what a terrible thing I had done—and—and I don't know how I'll ever make amends for my behavior."

I assured her that I had quite forgotten any unpleasantness that might have passed between us, and that it was she, not I, to whom apologies were due. She soon became calmer.

"That was a very silly idea of mine about being conventional," she added. "I'm not really conventional at all. In fact, I don't mind telling you right now that I think you are quite nice, and I like you very much indeed."

"Miss Fanning," said I gravely, "you are undoubtedly the most interesting girl I have ever met."

"Oh, no," she protested. "I'm not interesting at all—only honest, and—I'm afraid—a little bit spoiled."

We were entering the village again. It was almost sunset. She turned to me once more and gave me her hand.

"Thank you *so* much," she said. Then, as an afterthought: "There will be dancing at the hotel this evening. If you should happen to be there, I *might* be introduced to you in a perfectly proper and conventional way."



LOVE IS A WEED

By ANNIE PROND HAMPTON

PASSION'S a flower;
Oppressed by too much tending,
It will die,
Its future life depending
On laugh or sigh.

Love is a weed;
Despite all harsh neglecting,
Want and woe,
Or crushed in arms protecting,
It still will grow.

A LYRIC OF THE STREET

By ARCHIBALD SULLIVAN

FROM the shade of my drooping cypress, asleep in the scented breeze,
From the arms of the moon and starlight, adrift in the olive trees,
From the land of the circling sunlight, from the breath of the emerald bay,
From the little white shrine and the silver chime of bells at the close of day,
To the burning heat of your pavements, the blast of your smoky air,
And the parching kiss of your midday sun that scorches my dusty hair,
The shadowless lines of sidewalks, the crash of your laboring streets,
And the tangled maze of black-lined haze, where wire with cable meets;
The rush of the nerveless engines, your pointing lamp posts high,
And the windowed wall of your buildings tall, a blot on your bleary sky;
And then when the feverish evenings drift into blackened light,
The blaze of your countless fireflies makes but a mock of night,
Clustered about your steeples, trembling in long festoons,
And hovering the space of your river's face like a flight of vagrant moons.
Solitary out on your warships, clouded in lanterns pale,
And faint and sweet hear the virgins' feet at the dim of a chancel rail.

Oh, the sleepless nights of your August, the tepid days of June,
And the weary stars through the blackened space that tremble near the moon,
The dawn that is clad in ashes, and rustles past the pane,
And the saffron-colored twilight, that quickly comes again;
Oh, twilight, hung with fever, oh, dawn, all old and gray,
What would I give for a single breath out of the emerald bay—
The little white shrine and the silver chime of the bells at the close of day!



SOME beauty is only rouge deep.



THE ideal husband is always the other woman's.



WHAT men see in the women they marry is always a puzzle to the women
they do not marry.

THE CHEVALIER DE ROCROI

By PIERRE LORRAINE

THREE were growls among the men of the Royal Light Cavalry. For three whole weeks it had been nothing but march and counter-march through a country devastated by war; it was farewell to the bountiful farmhouses of the Palatinate, with the festoons of sausage ever hanging from their beams, plump hams yellowed in the fumes of the juniper, and that stout brown beer which is both eating and drinking and a pint of which sets a man up like so much Moselle. Ah, that topaz-tinted wine of Moselle, that bottled courage, sparkling, elegant—it was not safe to speak of it to the R. L. C., when for two entire months they had quaffed naught but water, and bad water at that, polluted by the carcass of many a poor horse—for not a few of these do go down in the warfare men wage with their legs!

M. de Saxe could hardly be said to have been in the odor of sanctity with his fine cavaliers on that eve of Lawfeld. *Ventre Saint Gris!* The Royal Light are good fellows! Give them a decent horse between their legs and a bumper of good wine in their insides and let them go; they will smite—they are the fellows for it! One to ten won't dismay them; the more that are slain, the more plunder there will be; and if they are fond of plunder, egad, they are not afraid to die, either, these chaps of the R. L. C.! It's what they live for, and they deal death as they take it—with a laugh! But as for this snail business of your foot soldiers, of louts, of sutlers, *palsambles*, what do you take us for, M. le Comte? The enemy is in front, and that is the road for us!

Such were the reflections of the Roy-

al Light Cavalry, as they drank to all the devils below, the Marechal Maurice de Saxe, His Majesty Louis XV, the well beloved, and M. de Nangis, their colonel—as well, the bravest simpleton—first in fire and fusillade, a colonel of the Royal Light, in a word, and the idol of all these blusterers, miscreants, pillagers, swaggerers, who were fearless as the sword of the King, noble as princes—and destitute as Want itself.

So when M. le Marquis appeared before his camp on the morning in question it was with more sulks than acclamations that he was received by them. But it was of little account to him—who knew his ravening wolves and how to make them hide their teeth. He had but to give them a taste of blood—and they were to have it at last, for M. de Saxe had successfully tricked the enemy and put them in a false position, so there would be some firing—some fight, that is—and the Royal Light Cavalry would laugh uproariously—with shouts like the howling of hungry wolves springing upon their prey.

"To saddle? . . . A rally? . . . What can he want now—more marches? . . . No! . . . The flag! Eh, that looks as if things were warming up to some purpose!" And the fangs show again under the long mustaches, but in a grin that is meant for a smile.

How fine the little Marquis looks now, astride his bay and decked out in his gold trimmings! The lace of his jabot and wristlets is enough to make the Queen's maids of honor sick with envy, and only that he carries a clumsy rapier instead of his dainty dress sword,

you might think he was off to see his sweetheart. To see her, indeed, is what he goes for; the real, the mighty mistress of every soldier, who to him is ever beautiful and well beloved in her bloodlike purple raiment, is—War!

The Chevalier de Rocroi is only just fifteen, and so delicately pretty that he looks like a girl disguised as a page. A second son, he has been sent into the army to make more room for M. le Comte de Verdanchet, his eldest brother; for they are poor, as good soldiers of fortune ought to be, and the family castle is too sparsely endowed with acres and timber to nourish more than the one brood of gentlemen. So to M. le Comte had fallen the perpetuation of their race, and M. le Chevalier was to reap, by as many strokes as fate might decree, what glory he could for the honor of his house. And lo, here he is, cornet to the Royal Light Cavalry. Very proud and deeply moved he is, too. His first call to action, and his only fear is that he may perhaps be afraid! His cheeks are paler than usual under his blond curls, and the old grumblers are not without noticing it.

Brigadier Flamberge, a gruff but cordial old veteran, draws up beside the colorbearer and holds out his gourd—full of vile Armagnac—to him.

"Have a pull at this, M. le Chevalier. It's a bit chilly, and this will warm you up!"

The youth swallows a few gulps of it, makes a face, coughs, reddens, sets his cap straight, and with his hand upon his hip as proud as Roland goes off to take his place at the head of his platoon.

The engagement begins. The Imperial forces in dense masses advance between Vlytingen and the village of Lawfeld; then the center doubles, and for an instant it would seem that the plans of M. de Saxe, well laid as they were, will turn against him. His right wing, which he had spread out to cut off the enemy's retreat by a skillful turn, is going to find itself separated from the main body of the army. From the top of the eminence, where they are posted in reserve, the Royal Light Cavalry follow the action with the eyes

of old soldiers who understand what they are looking at—and they grow restless.

A charge there will have to be, *vertu-bleu* to crush this rabble. Nangis, calm and cool, motionless as a mounted statue, alone in front of the line, seems, however, not to hear these protests of his wolves. He smiles disdainfully, his heart untroubled. "The more they rage, the better they strike," he says to himself. But up comes Cadet de Lesdiguières at a swift gallop! And—"with orders"—at last!

Out from their scabbards leap the swords, and the horses rear beneath the spurs. Nangis looks over his shoulder, and those who were too eager fall back into the ranks.

"Marquis," cries Lesdiguières out of breath, "M. le Marechal sends you orders to charge these men! Fall upon their right, while M. de Trenes will pipe them a similar tune from the left with his dragoons!"

Instantly Nangis veers his horse, and his virile tones ring out above the din of musketry. "Gentlemen, we are going to charge! And bear in mind that no soldier of the Royal Light has ever yet shown his spurs! To the charge! Follow me! Forward!" And urging his horse to a gallop, he clears the decline, his wolves at his heels howling like all the demons of hell.

Faster! Faster! Nearer! Nearer! The red line of the enemy's infantry, which is waiting for them drawn up in squares, thickens. Faster! Faster! It is no longer a regiment—it is an avalanche of men and horses! A roll of the drums is sounded; a wave of steel and fire breaks! At fifty paces the soldiers of Cumberland open fire.

Nangis sways in his saddle—and falls! Lesdiguières, Turgis, Chateauroux, Mortemart—all go down. The regiment scatters like a handful of dried leaves in a whirlwind. The white standard disappears! Will the Royal Light Cavalry flee? Not they! Up goes the glorious rag once more, but it is white and red now! A very diminutive cavalryman carries it. He has let go his sword, not having the strength

to hold the heavy gold and silken banner with only one hand.

"Forward, Royal Light! Forward!" he yells, with a voice that, though childlike, is so shrill and piercing that it penetrates the din of the fight. The old fellows pull themselves together, rally their horses, and what remains of the regiment silently and with clenched teeth falls upon the Imperial square like a thunderbolt—and overwhelms it!

It is none too soon. A moment later they would have recharged, and the second volley would have completed the havoc begun by the first.

Motionless in the heart of the enemy's square, upright in his stirrups and holding the *fleur-de-lys* banner in both his hands, the little horseman continues with his ringing voice to urge on the mowers of those serried ranks.

It is a fearful hand-to-hand encounter now—without mercy! Blades pierce breasts; pommels break skulls; the heavy horses crush the fallen!

The little horseman strikes no blow, but he does better work. His voice is like a trumpet, and the flag he waves toward heaven is the emblem of the victory these fellows are being hacked for, without one regret.

All at once, hit from behind, the little horseman sways—and for the second time the flag is lowered!

Flamberge then, with arms of iron, lifts up the colors, raises the youth, and twirling his sword above him, cries: "Hardi, boys! Kill them—kill them! Avenge the child!"

A furious outburst responds from the left; it is the dragoons of Monsieur arrived to the rescue!

The Imperial square, now broken on both sides, finally surrenders. It is slaughter now, and what is left of the Royal Light shows no quarter!

In the glory of the setting sun a dazzling company appeared upon the battlefield. The Marechal de Saxe was explaining to His Majesty Louis XV how it was that he had succeeded in transforming so hopeless an outlook into victory. From one bivouac to another they passed, bestowing praise

and provoking cheers from the troops now drunk with glory and with bloodshed. But—what silent company was this before them? Could it be that the Royal Light, bravest of the brave, were not celebrating this day? In a compact group, with their backs turned to the brilliant cavalcade as it advanced they showed no sign of interest whatever.

"Gentlemen of the Royal Light, His Majesty comes to offer you congratulations!" They turned and saluted—but not a word was spoken; their hardened faces were all sad. The astonished King brought up his horse into the midst of them. A youth lay there, wrapped in a flag. His golden head, thrown back upon a saddlebow, had already the seal of death upon it. Flamberge, on his knees beside him, with a blood-stained rag bathed the brow that was moist with sweat.

"What have we here?" asked His Majesty. "A child, is it?"

"That," replied Flamberge with a husky voice, "is Monsieur le Chevalier de Rocroi! This was his first engagement. And it was he who for a whole half-hour upheld the flag in the heart of the Imperial square! But for him—we would have fled! The colors, too heavy for his arms, gave him no chance to defend himself, and—and—we let them kill him!" Then Flamberge burst into tears.

The King dismounted quickly, and got upon his knees beside the wounded and now delirious child, who was calling for his mother.

"My lad," said he tenderly, "this is the King speaking to you. What would you like him to say for you to madame your mother?"

"The King!" said the boy. "The King!" And raising himself slightly, he gazed into the face bent over him. "Tell her—that—I did—my best!"

"What would you like, little lad? Would you like the Cross of St. Louis—the same as your father had?"

"Yes," said the boy. "Oh, yes!" And then, recalling in his poor confused mind one of the dreams of his youth—one of the longings of destitute

gentility which it never had been possible to gratify, he added: "And—I would like so much—to have—a watch!"

"A watch!" said the King, smiling in spite of himself, and fumbling in his pockets. "Well, here, child, take mine; it is a watch—fit for a gentleman!"

The dying boy rested his eyes dreamily upon the diamond-studded time-piece. "For my mother," he said.

"Monsieur le Marechal, your Cross, if you please," said Louis XV in a voice

that was none too steady, and laying the Cross of St. Louis on the heaving breast of the youth.

"Chevalier," said he, "the watch shall be for your mother, and the Cross is for yourself." Then, bending over him, he bestowed the accolade, and when he rose the boy no longer breathed!

Thus, in his fifteenth year, did M. le Chevalier de Rocroi, the standard bearer of the Royal Light Cavalry, meet his death.



TO A DOUBTER

By HERMAN DA COSTA

THE Wind of Death beat down the Flame of Life;
It flared and from the wick was swiftly drawn.
And who am I to say whence came the Flame,
Or whither gone?

When dies my light, and you, with doubting heart,
Will ask where went the flame that flickered out,
If mayhap through the dusk a whisper came,
Would you not doubt?

The silent tenants of the quiet cells—
Disturb them not by asking where they go.
For, though they answer, still you cannot hear,
And will not know.



THE SCOTCH MIST

By WILLIAM PATTERSON WHITE

OH, 'tis maist uncoudy weather,
For the rook is snoovin' doon,
An' draikin' a' the heather
On the moor ahint the toon!
Sic weather fash'd me lang syne;
Noo, I carena—nocht ava'
A lassie brocht the sunshine,
An' the rook can snoove awa'.

THE VICTORIOUS SURRENDER OF LADY SYBIL

By CAPTAIN LESLIE T. PEACOCKE

CHARACTERS

RONALD HESKETH (*a handsome, well groomed man, age thirty-five*)

LADY SYBIL HESKETH (*his wife, age twenty-one, aristocratic and extremely pretty*)

THE DUCHESS OF IXBRIDGE (*age forty-five, motherly and kind, but very much a "grande dame"*)

CONSTANCE PIERPOINT (*a widow, age twenty-five, very fascinating and beautiful*)

PERKINS (*a butler*)

PLACE: ENGLAND

TIME: THE PRESENT

SCENE—*The hall, which is also used as the drawing-room, in the country mansion of RONALD HESKETH. There are doors at the center, right and left, and at the back is a staircase leading up to bedrooms. The hall is sumptuously furnished. A figure of a warrior in armor stands at each side of the center door, which is the entrance door to the mansion. Paintings, portraits and stags' heads adorn the walls.*

As the curtain rises the DUCHESS is seen seated on a settee to the left with a coffee cup in her hand. LADY SYBIL is standing beside her; RONALD and CONSTANCE PIERPOINT are up stage. All are in evening dress. PERKINS enters at the left with a tray, goes straight to the DUCHESS, takes her cup, then those of the others. It is after dinner. A large clock at the left strikes nine.

DUCHESS

Ronald, I should like my carriage in fifteen minutes.

RONALD

Well, if you insist. (*To PERKINS*)
Her Grace's carriage in fifteen minutes.

RONALD

So soon, Duchess?

PERKINS

Yes, sir. (*Goes out at the left.*)

DUCHESS

Yes; I like to get to bed early in the country. (*Laughing.*) My roses, you know.

RONALD

I want to show Mrs. Pierpoint the moonlight on the lake from the east terrace. Will you come, Duchess?

DUCHESS

Moonlight! No, thanks. I want to talk to Sybil. You go; I'm getting too old for moonshine.

CONSTANCE

Mr. Hesketh says it is well worth seeing.

DUCHESS

No, my dear; it might make me romantic. There is nothing new for me in the moon; I've seen it. If you'll find me a genuine large comet I'll come. One with a genuine tail—not fiction.

CONSTANCE

Oh, fie, Duchess! What a pun! We'll try. (*Goes out at the center with RONALD, both laughing.*)

DUCHESS (*gazing after them as the door closes*) Sybil.

SYBIL (*who has been trying to appear indifferent*) Yes.

DUCHESS

Is this getting to be chronic?

SYBIL

What, Duchess?

DUCHESS

This—er—moonshine.

SYBIL

Er—I don't know what you mean.

DUCHESS

Come here. I want to talk to you, Sybil. (*SYBIL sits beside her.*) I have known you since you were quite a little tot—since you were about so high, haven't I, Sybil?

SYBIL

Er—yes.

DUCHESS

And your mother was one of my best friends. So you see, dear, I feel somehow privileged to say things which you might resent as a liberty from most people. May I exercise that privilege?

SYBIL (*hesitatingly*) Er—why, yes, of course.

DUCHESS

How long have you and Ronald been married? Six months?

SYBIL

No; seven months and sixteen days.

DUCHESS (*repressing a smile*) Oh, yes! Seven months and er—sixteen days. I see—you count the days.

SYBIL (*embarrassed*) Well—er—I mean it's about six months and a half.

DUCHESS

I know. You love Ronald, don't you, Sybil?

SYBIL (*visibly confused*) Well, er—really, Duchess, you ought not to ask—

DUCHESS (*seizing her hands*) I know, dear, but you mustn't think I am being impertinent. I know quite a lot and I see quite a lot, and—and—won't you tell me everything?

SYBIL (*startled*) Everything?

DUCHESS

About your marriage—*since* your marriage. I know it wasn't a love match on your part—I gathered that from your father—but I do know that Ronald was madly in love with you.

SYBIL (*surprised, but incredulous*) Why, that's—that's nonsense!

DUCHESS (*reprovingly*) You have no right to say that, Sybil. Did he never tell you so himself?

SYBIL

Yes, I suppose he did—er—I mean of course he did, but that was part of the scheme. It was the least I could expect.

DUCHESS

I don't quite understand.

SYBIL (*wearily*) Of course you know why he married me—everyone knows that. I heard my father discussing it with Aunt Geraldine before he spoke to me. It was one night in the library, when I was reading in a big chair, and they didn't know I was there. I didn't want to listen, but I couldn't escape. I heard the whole thing planned.

DUCHESS

What on earth are you talking about, Sybil? What was planned?

SYBIL

The marriage, of course. Ronald had spoken to my father, and of course you know how poor we were. Everything was mortgaged, and Ronald is so rich, you know. He owns half the county nearly, but he wanted to have an earl's daughter for his wife. I suppose any earl's daughter would have done. Father said he was ambitious.

DUCHESS

Why, my dear Sybil! Ronald isn't a snob.

SYBIL

I know. I didn't think so until then, but Aunt Geraldine said it was a marriage of convenience, and that it was a good thing for me, and—and then they told me I would have to consent—for the sake of the family, they called it.

DUCHESS

What a bungle! My dear Sybil, you have misjudged Ronald altogether. His grandfather made all this money in trade or something, but his people are very good, as you know. Why, his mother was one of the Pentlands of Warwick, and though not in the Peerage, was better connected than most peers. I knew her well.

SYBIL

Oh, I know! He's a gentleman in every way.

DUCHESS

And as much in love with you as a man can be. You know that now, don't you?

SYBIL (*rising confusedly*) I don't see how you can say that.

DUCHESS

Why, everything is all right between you now, isn't it?

SYBIL (*drawing a figure with her toe on the carpet*) As we arranged it—I suppose—er—yes.

October, 1910—9

DUCHESS

As you arranged it! How do you mean? Are you not on good terms?

SYBIL

Oh, yes, quite—you can see that.

DUCHESS

Yes, but I'm puzzled. Are you—are you on loving terms?

SYBIL

Well, you see, Duchess, when I agreed to marry Ronald I told him it would have to be on certain conditions, and—er—and he promised to agree to them.

DUCHESS

DUCHESS (*after a thoughtful pause*) Oh! I see! He is the husband of an earl's daughter, and you are the wife of a wealthy man—and your family is relieved from financial worry—but—er—but you live apart?

SYBIL

Well—er—yes. About like that.

DUCHESS

And is—is Ronald perfectly satisfied?

SYBIL

Why, yes. Of course. That was the arrangement. Those were the terms.

DUCHESS

Made by you?

SYBIL

Yes, but he agreed. (*She produces a key from her bodice.*) You see, I'm my own mistress.

DUCHESS (*touching the key*) What is that—that key?

SYBIL

The key of the west wing. The west wing is mine. I am never to be asked to allow him to come there. That is what we agreed.

DUCHESS

Before you were married, I suppose. But has he never asked you to reconsider those terms? Has he not tried to make you love him?

SYBIL

He is always kind, of course, but—er—you see, he promised never to speak of love until I—until I asked him to.

DUCHESS (*aside, intensely amused*) This is simply delicious! (*Aloud.*) But surely, Sybil, he must let you see sometimes that you are not indifferent to him. You can't tell me that.

SYBIL

Oh, he hints—of course, he hints—often.

DUCHESS

Lately?

SYBIL

Er—not in the last few days, no.

DUCHESS

Since Mrs. Pierpoint came to stay!
I see!

SYBIL

Why, Duchess! What do you mean?

DUCHESS

What I ought not to have said—perhaps. I said, "I see."

SYBIL

But Mrs. Pierpoint is a great friend of mine. I like Constance very much.

DUCHESS

Yes, she is a very lovable woman, I think, and a very fascinating widow. You cannot blame Ronald.

SYBIL (*uneasily*) But—but, Duchess, Ronald—Ronald is my husband!

DUCHESS

And Ronald is a very good-looking man. (*Carriage wheels are heard.*) He is in love with you, I am sure. Don't cure him of that. Don't try him too far. Men are funny creatures, my dear. That's my carriage, I think. (*RONALD and CONSTANCE enter at the center, and on the door opening, the champing of carriage horses are heard.* PERKINS enters at the left and approaches the DUCHESS.)

PERKINS

Your Grace's carriage is at the door.

DUCHESS

Thank you. (*PERKINS goes out.*) My wraps are in your room, Sybil. (*She rises, and taking SYBIL's arm, moves to the door at the right.*) Did you find my comet, Ronald?

CONSTANCE

There were lots of shooting stars. They kept us making wishes.

DUCHESS (*laughing*) Wishes! Yes, I have made that sort of wishes, but they were just fleeting, like the shooting stars; they don't come true. Come, Sybil. (*She goes out with SYBIL.*)

RONALD (*gazing after the DUCHESS and his wife*) What did she mean by that?

CONSTANCE

Nothing, perhaps. I don't think she likes me, Ronald.

RONALD

Nonsense! She doesn't mean anything. She's a good sort, you know.

CONSTANCE

Yes—with an eye like a gimlet. (*She places her hand on RONALD's arm.*) I am going to get that book, Ronald. May I come and read it to you in the library after—after she is gone?

RONALD (*eagerly*). Yes, please. But won't you say good night to her?

CONSTANCE (*moving to the staircase*) I—I'd rather not, Ronald. She upsets me. Make my excuses. Say my head aches or something. (*She mounts the stairs slowly.*) Make them have a good fire in the library. Let's have it cozy.

RONALD

I will. Don't be too long. (*CONSTANCE gives him a lingering glance and goes upstairs.*) What a fool I am! Why does Sybil— Oh, hang the woman! (*He is angry with himself, and while loving his wife, is piqued at her for refusing his advances. The DUCHESS and SYBIL enter at the right, the former in furs and carrying a muff.*)

DUCHESS

You are coming over to dinner on Sunday. Sybil has promised.

RONALD (*to SYBIL*) Shall we? Oh, all right. (*To the DUCHESS.*) Thanks, and—er—Mrs. Pierpoint is staying, you know.

DUCHESS

Oh, of course! Bring her, please, if—er—if she hasn't left you before then.

SYBIL

Where is Constance?

RONALD

She went to her room. Her head was aching. She asked me to make her excuses, Duchess. (*PERKINS enters at the left and goes to the center door to open it.*)

DUCHESS (*laughing*) Too many wishes! Too many stars! Moonshine! That young woman must be in love. Did she confide in you, Ronald? Keep her from getting romantic, Sybil. (*She kisses her.*) Good night, dear. (*She shakes hands with RONALD.*) Good night, Ronald. (*PERKINS opens the door at the center.*) Sunday—don't forget. Good night.

SYBIL

Good night, Duchess.

RONALD (*going out the center door after her*) Good night. (*He enters and closes the door, then turns to PERKINS.*) See that there's a good fire in the library.

PERKINS

Yes, sir. (*Goes out.*)

SYBIL

Are you going to sit up, Ronald?

RONALD (*ill at ease*) Yes—er—just for—er—for a little, I think.

SYBIL

You don't often read—read at night, do you?

RONALD

Oh—er—sometimes. Not often, but—er—oh, yes, I do sometimes. Why? Why do you ask?

SYBIL (*embarrassed, but anxious*) Oh, nothing. I—I often wonder how you pass the time when you are alone. I—I can't help feeling a bit curious sometimes. That's only natural, Ronald.

RONALD

How do you mean, "curious?" Curious about what?

SYBIL (*laughing nervously*) Oh, don't look so serious, Ronald! I don't want to know all your secrets. Please sit down. I—I want to have a talk with you about some things. May I?

RONALD (*sitting on the settee, surprised, and with an apprehensive backward glance at the staircase*) Why, yes, of course, delighted.

SYBIL (*sitting on the arm of the settee*) Don't you want to smoke?

RONALD (*taking a cigarette case from his pocket and extracting a cigarette*) Thanks. I will.

SYBIL

We don't often have a chat, do we, Ronald?

RONALD (*lighting the cigarette*) No, not very often. Not lately.

SYBIL

Not for several days. You—you haven't seemed to want to, have you?

RONALD (*embarrassed*) Well, really, Sybil, you know—er—you know, I didn't think that somehow you particularly cared about it, you know.

SYBIL

I haven't done anything or said anything to displease you, have I, Ronald?

RONALD

Good gracious, no! But you see the last time I—I—well, I made myself rather—rather silly—I trod on forbidden ground.

SYBIL (*demurely*) Yes. You—you hinted.

RONALD (*petulantly*) Yes, I hinted, as you call it. I—I've been hinting for the last six months. I've been swallowing my pride ever since we've been married.

SYBIL (*after a slight pause*) Yes, but you agreed to that before, Ronald.

RONALD

Agreed! Of course, I agreed. I wanted you to marry me, didn't I? I had to agree.

SYBIL

Yes—I—I suppose so, but you never said anything about not wanting to agree to it afterward. Did you?

RONALD (*eagerly interested*) Well, no. I never thought, you know. I just hoped—er—well, I just wanted you an awful lot, you know.

SYBIL (*visibly agitated*) Oh! I—er—I see. Then, why—why didn't—(*She pauses, confused.*)

RONALD

Why didn't what?

SYBIL

Oh, I can't explain. There has been a great mistake, Ronald. A mistake all round, and—and—I—(*PERKINS enters. SYBIL collects herself hastily. She has been bending lower and lower toward him on the lounge.*)

PERKINS

There is a good fire now, sir.

RONALD (*startled*) Oh! All right; thanks.

SYBIL

Has the milk gone to my room?

PERKINS

Yes, my lady. (*Goes out.*)

SYBIL

What are you going to read in the library, Ronald? A book?

RONALD (*laughing awkwardly*) Well —er—yes. One generally does read a book. Why?

SYBIL

Oh, I—I didn't know. Is it a good book?

RONALD

I don't know. It's one of Constance —er—Mrs. Pierpoint's.

SYBIL (*abashed*) Oh! Is—is she in the library?

RONALD (*awkwardly*) No. She went up to her room—to—to get the book.

SYBIL (*rising from the arm of the sofa, miserably jealous*) I—I see. Then you—you ought to go to the library. It—it will be too late to read if you don't. (*With a sudden impulse.*) May—may I come, too, Ronald?

RONALD (*nonplussed*) Why, yes—er—of course. If you want to.

SYBIL (*lamely and on the point of breaking down*) I'd like to hear it. I—I'll get my silk work. (*She runs to the door at the right. CONSTANCE appears at the top of the staircase and stands watching behind a pillar. She has let her hair fall loose over her shoulders and has put on a fascinating kimono.*) I—I'll keep as quiet as a mouse. I—I won't interrupt you. (*Goes out.*)

RONALD (*rising from the settee*). The deuce! (*PERKINS enters, which causes CONSTANCE to draw back as she was about to descend the staircase.*)

PERKINS

I've lit the reading lamp, sir.

RONALD

Oh, that's all right. That'll do. (*PERKINS goes out and RONALD moves to follow him, but SYBIL enters and approaches him timorously.*)

SYBIL

Ronald! (*He turns to her.*) Ronald, I—I don't think I want to go to the

library. I—I wanted to say good night to you—and—there was something else—this. (She extends her hand timidly and places something in his palm, then goes out overcome with embarrassment.)

RONALD (*gazing with amazement from his open palm to the door*) The key! (CONSTANCE has been watching anxiously from the top of the staircase and runs down eagerly curious, with the book in her hand.)

CONSTANCE

What is it, Ronald? (She peers over his shoulder.) What's that? (RONALD tries to keep it from her, but she seizes his hand and forces it open.)

CONSTANCE (*nonplused*) Oh! (Both gaze at it as if dazed. She is overcome and utterly at a loss for something fitting to say.) Then—then you won't want to read. (She hands him the book. He takes it mechanically and tosses it indifferently onto the settee. CONSTANCE gasps with annoyance.) Oh, Ronald! (He pays no heed, but stands as if petrified.) Then I—I—I'll go away tomorrow, Ronald. (He appears not to hear.) I say I—I'll go away tomorrow. (She lays her hand on his arm.) Good night. Good night, Ronald. (He still makes no move.) Good night—Mr. Hesketh!

RONALD (*indifferently*) Oh! Oh, good night.

CONSTANCE (*clenching her hands angrily. She is disappointedly enraged.*) Good night! (She runs up the stairs and pauses on the top, but he is gazing intently at the key. She goes out. The door is heard to bang loudly. RONALD starts as if shot.)

RONALD
Eh? Oh! By Jove!

PERKINS (*entering hurriedly*) Er—anything wrong, sir?

RONALD
Wrong? No. What's wrong?

PERKINS
I—er—I thought I heard a noise, sir. (RONALD shakes his head.) Then everything is all right, sir?

RONALD
Yes. You can lock up—and—and you may put the lights out in the library. I—I've changed my mind.

PERKINS
Yes, sir. And there is nothing more you want, sir?

RONALD
Nothing, Perkins. (PERKINS goes out. RONALD gives a great sigh of contentment.) There is nothing more I want—now. (And tenderly gazing at the key, he raises it slowly to his lips, and the clock strikes ten as the curtain falls.)



THE man whose life is an open book usually furnishes poor reading.



AN epigram at breakfast is like champagne with the bubbles left out.

THE TRAIL

By "TRESSLER"

I WALK a narrow path.

On either side of me falls the chasm—a mile deep, and bristling with rocks.
The Harpies tug at my feet, trying to drag me now into the one abyss—
now into the other.

Every few steps there is a break in the trail—a great crack which I frantically leap.

If I stop or cry out I shall perish. I cannot turn to go back. My head feels light, as if it would leave my shoulders and float up—up to the sky, which seems to me nearer than the cruel Earth.

My eyes burn with ever looking far ahead. I dare not see what is around me—below me; I compel my gaze and my thoughts to rest only upon the dim outlines of a castle far, far before me.

It is the Castle of the Hope of Happiness.



THE FEMALE FAN

By W. B. KERR

OH, why doesn't the pitcher *pitch* the ball?
And why are the basemen base?
Because they let the runner steal?
Why does he slide on his face?
How does a fielder muff a fly?
Is a shortstop ever tall?
Would the umpire call the catcher out,
If he didn't catch the ball?
Do they ever let the batter pitch?
Is it fair to knock a foul?
Does a home run count more than a bunt?
What makes the people howl?
Oh, isn't a pop-up simply grand—
And a squeeze play just divine!
But why do the men have mittens on
In the hot old summertime?

THE WAY O' THE WORLD*

By MAY ISABEL FISK

HER STORY.

Oh, Ethel dear, you *darling*—how perfectly heavenly to find you at home this lovely afternoon! I hadn't an idea I would see you when I made up my mind to come—I was sure everyone would be out and then I could get all my calls off my mind without a bit of trouble. . . . Now, Ethel, that is utterly unworthy of you—you know I didn't mean that. You were the *one* person I was hoping to find. Besides, I have heaps and heaps to talk to you about. . . . Oh, you silly! There's nothing in it at all—there's nothing between Irving Browne and me. I don't say there *might* not be if he had *his* way—I know everyone seems to think he is in love with you. I wouldn't go so far as to say that myself, for I must admit that I do think—in fact, I'm *sure*—he is just a bit—a *keeny* bit—taken with me. Still, that's another story, and if I don't get on with what I came to talk about it will never be told.

My dear, isn't that a new ring you have on? And on your engagement finger, too! . . . Oh, it isn't an engagement ring? Well, dear, I hardly thought it was, because— Oh, well, you know I thought you were—well, too sensible to go in for that sort of thing. Now I come to think of it, I met Irving Browne the other day in Bond Street. He stopped me and made me look in at a jeweler's at a ring that looked ever so much like the one you have on—asked me, if I were going to have an engagement ring, if that was the sort of one I would pick out for myself. Did you ever hear of anything so pointed? I knew in a moment if I gave him the slightest encour-

agement he would have proposed to me right there, in the middle of Bond Street—and the busses going by, too. But I didn't. I really wouldn't have told you this if that ring on your finger hadn't made me think of it. . . . Oh, your aunt gave it to you?

Well, my dear, I want to tell you all about Mrs. Grant's week end party and about Douglas Sloane. Talk about being persecuted with attentions—it was simply too awful; don't know what will happen to the poor boy if I throw him over entirely. I never have seen such a case of absolute slavish devotion—actually followed me about like a little dog! I didn't mind, though, for I could see poor Flora Grant was wild with rage about the way he hung around me. How she has gone off this last year! And the way she chases after poor Major Rodney is too absurd.

Well, there was Douglas—I will tell you later how I came to call him by his first name—waiting at the station for me with the pony cart. Of course, I saw he had arranged it so he could have a little *tête-à-tête* before I met the others. When we drove up to the house there was the whole gang out on the lawn having tea. Flora Grant pretended to be so pleased to see me, but I could see she did not like the idea of Douglas bringing me himself in the pony cart. Douglas at once flew over to her—to try and placate her, I suppose—but presently came back to me with a face about a yard long. It was so ridiculous, as though he could not leave me for a moment to speak to another woman—and the hostess at that—without going into a spasm.

He wouldn't cheer up a bit until I had let him have three cups of tea and end-

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less cakes. When the dressing gong rang Flora called him over and I heard her say something about "dinner"—I couldn't catch what it was. Monty Roe had stopped to speak to me, and though I am pretty good at listening to another conversation while someone else is talking to me, this time I couldn't catch a thing but that one word, "dinner." When we started for the house I wish you could have seen Douglas's face *then*—a yard and a half long this time—fancy just because he was going to be away from me one little hour! I managed to whisper to him that it wouldn't be for long, and he mumbled something about hoping it wouldn't. I couldn't help but be sorry for him.

I wore my green spangled frock with a red rose—I knew Douglas liked green. They were all waiting when I came down, and I wish you could have seen Douglas's expression when he saw me! The others were all paired off already and poor Douglas lounging in a corner waiting for me.

At dinner I had, of course, him on one side and Harold Wood on the other. I thought I would upset Douglas a bit, so I started right in—with the *hors d'œuvres*—to flirt desperately with Harold. It was too funny. Douglas immediately turned to Edith Scott—horrid little cat—who was on the other side of him and began the most animated talking you could imagine—laughing the whole time just to show me he didn't care what I did. Of course this set me off worse than ever, and such howling around our end of the table you never heard. When I was in the middle of the soup, though, my conscience hurt me a bit, so I turned to Douglas and said he might talk to me a little if he wanted to. I wish you could have seen his face again—black as a thunder cloud. You can always tell when a man is getting really desperately in love with you by the nasty way he begins to treat you. When we were well into the salad I dropped him again and turned to Harold.

After dinner, Flora—such a tactless hostess, isn't she? Seems to delight in making everyone as thoroughly uncom-

fortable as she can—invites you there just to see how disagreeable she can fix things. Well, she insisted on having me sing. It was awfully pretty, really. We pulled the piano close up to the long open windows, and the moon streamed in—then someone turned off all the lights. Everyone began to drop away, one by one, out to the terrace in twos and threes—but Flora and Douglas stopped way off in a shadowy corner. I could feel, though, how moved he was, and he started to go, too, but Flora whispered to him and he came slowly back, and then she went out and we were alone. Pretty soon I stopped playing and ran my hands over the keys, and Douglas came up to me looking so unhappy. Well, I don't know what it was—the moonlight, I suppose—he was leaning over the top of the piano looking at me and I half sort of leaned toward him—quite accidentally, you know—and then—I don't know—he sort of edged toward me or I toward him, and then I stood up or he leaned over—I forget which—and then, somehow, I found my hand in his—he didn't dare to squeeze it hard—he is one of those men you have to encourage a little—and then—well, in some way he managed to kiss me.

Of course, I tried my best to stop him—I wouldn't have had it happen for the world—you know I don't believe in that sort of thing; a girl can't be too particular—and I knew mamma would be awfully cross about it—I mean if I told her. I never have told her anything like that—I mean if it had ever happened before I wouldn't—you understand. But, anyway, there you are. So, of course, after that I called him Douglas. I could see how pleased he was about it, for he fairly turned pale at breakfast next morning when I said it for the first time at the table.

Flora was green with rage and nearly choked in her coffee cup. I forgot to say I saw her in the doorway the night before when Douglas ki—kissed me. I thought it was just as well to have a witness, don't you know, in that kind of thing, so I didn't draw Douglas's attention to it.

I suppose I am sort of engaged to him now—I can't say I am fearfully keen about him, but, then, everyone says he has plenty of money, so perhaps that would help on a loveless marriage, anyway. It's too bad, though, for the love to be all on his side, poor boy—I'm sorry for him.

Oh, no; I haven't seen him since then. No, nor heard from him after we came back to town. I really suppose the poor chap is too timid—you haven't any idea how bashful he really is—but that was only two weeks ago. I suppose he is afraid I will throw him over. Poor boy, I must write him again and ask him to tea. . . . Ye-es, yes, I did write him once, I think, but he hasn't replied—probably didn't get the note—the post is so uncertain nowadays. Of course, you know, nothing is really settled about it, so you won't say a word, will you? . . . I knew you wouldn't, dear. Well, I must be off. Good-bye, you darling.

HIS STORY.

Well, Irving Browne, by all that's holy! Come in, old man. Haven't seen you in a month of Sundays. Take off your coat. Hang it anywhere—on the floor, if you like. Draw up by the fire. Rotten day, isn't it? . . . Oh, well, perhaps it isn't! Got the dumps the worst way—ever since I came back from Flora Grant's week end party. Topping little widow that! Plenty of ginger, too, but the best sort in the world—hasn't got her mind on the l. s. d. all the time—she's the kind that would stick to a fellow if he hadn't a bob to bless himself with. Have something? I'll join you. Shove the soda over, will you—you're nearest. Have a cigarette? You'll find the box on that table. Don't mind, I suppose, if I take a pipe? . . . Good boy.

Well, let me tell you, Flora Grant has about the wisest head on her pretty shoulders. Spoiled my week end, though—I've been week-ending there rather frequently of late. Said I was altogether too attentive to her openly and everyone was gossiping about it. Of course, I suppose anyone, unless he

was blind and deaf, couldn't fail to see I'm clean gone on the little widow. Said she had a neat scheme to shut up all the cats with. Announced first thing I got down there, the only thing to stop their talking about us was for me to be openly attentive to someone else, so she had invited Hilda Rathbone for my express delectation. If there is one girl on earth I simply can't stand, it's Hilda Rathbone—little devil, I believe she knew it! So she invited a crowd last week end to witness the row, and so spread the news broadcast about my infatuation for the Rathbone girl.

Started me off first thing to meet her alone in a pony cart at the station. I kicked at that, but it was no use; Her Ladyship was adamant, and I had to go. When we came trundling along in that ridiculous pony cart, there was the whole crowd out on the front lawn having tea. Always before we have had tea comfortably down at the tennis courts, but trust Flora to arrange matters—every mother's son and daughter lined up to gape at our triumphal entry! I was hot under the collar, I can tell you, and as soon as I had landed the fair Hilda with a cup of tea I rushed over to Flora and begged her to let me have a turn around the garden to cheer me up and steady my nerves. She wouldn't—sent me straight back to the slaughter, and it was only after I had nearly drowned myself with tea and consumed a dozen or so cakes that I felt sufficiently strong to go on with the game.

Thought, of course, as I had behaved so well about the afternoon, Flora would reward me by letting me take her in to dinner. Not a bit of it! She called me over to her just as the dressing gong sounded and said I had to take Hilda in to dinner, as I was most likely to lose my head then and be conspicuously attentive, and everyone there to see it. Had to walk up to the house with Hilda, just about as miserable a man as you could see. Must have shown my feelings pretty plainly for Hilda whispered something or other about it not being for long—don't know what she meant—but I was in such a funk that I just blurted out I hoped it wouldn't be!

The stupid little minx kept everyone waiting before she came down—wanted to make a show of herself walking in. And would you believe it—a girl with that complexion—tricked herself out in some sort of hideous green spangled affair that made her look like a boa constrictor—and then she topped off this horror with a red rose! When I looked up and saw this ghastly combination come sailing into the drawing-room I came within one of chucking up the whole job, then and there; but I got such a warning frown from Flora—bless her dear little heart—why, I braced up to take my medicine again. As good luck would have it, although I had to take Hilda in to dinner, she had Harold Wood on the other side. He is always a pal in distress, and when I tipped him the wink he began to make up to her furiously. Just as I was getting along rippingly with Edie Scott—nice little girl, that—I've always had a soft spot in my heart for her—of course, I had also to keep a weather eye out that the widow didn't observe all this—I knew she couldn't see me squeezing Edie's hand under the table. As I say, just as I was enjoying myself, Hilda turns around and puts an end to everything—my spirits went to zero again. Never had anyone had such a depressing effect on me—always makes me think of suicide and sudden death. I struggled through dinner somehow, comforting myself with the thought that at least I could arrange a *tête-à-tête* with Flora out in the moonlight later. There is a most entrancing little summerhouse down by the river, quite shut off from anywhere. But she insisted—out of sheer viciousness, I'm sure—insisted on getting my torturer to sing. I had a brilliant idea, and had the piano pushed as near the open window as it would go, to let as much of the sound as possible go outside, and then turned the lights off so her contortions couldn't be seen. Ever see Hilda going through the singing act? . . . No? You've got a treat in store for you. Of course, under cover of the darkness everyone began to slip away—they wouldn't have dared to with the lights on—and finally the little

widow and myself were the only ones left. I suggested to her that we might run away to the summerhouse for a few moments, but she said, no, I must stay; and then off *she* went.

There was nothing else to do—I couldn't go on sitting way off in a corner like a spanked kid—when, too, you know a girl is clean off her head about you you've got to show a little spirit—so over I went to the piano and leaned on it, looking as much like a lovesick calf as I knew how. Her unattractions didn't stand out so plainly in the moonlight and if ever I saw a come-and-kiss-me look on any girl's face she had it—absolutely begging for it. I shut my eyes and made a swoop, and she rose right to the bait—fairly threw herself at me. Just then I thought I heard a swish of skirts, and sure enough, there in the doorway I made out the widow with someone—I couldn't tell who it was. Then there was a smothered giggle and she was gone. Rotten luck I call it. I tried to get a word with her later in the billiard room, but she wouldn't have it—gave me the chuck at once, and I haven't been able to fix it up since. All the rest of the time she pretended to be terribly taken with that old mummy Rodney—but I could tell she was doing it just to get me wild. And she did, all right. Suppose she will come around after her wrath cools off. Shouldn't care to lose track of her entirely. The Colonel left her pretty comfortably fixed, I believe. Nice little place she's got down there on the river, and a bully good house in town. Her family has money, too.

If you'll believe it—serves me jolly well right, too—next morning at breakfast Hilda began to call me Douglas. 'Pon my word, old chap, I know I went livid. And, of course, Her Ladyship began to smile behind her cup and I got wilder than ever. Can't help, though, feeling rather sorry for the little Rathbone kid, for—there's no use mincing matters between pals—the girl is desperately in love with me—not conceit, you know, but I can always see through a millstone if there's a hole in it. They say she'll come into money when her uncle dies.

Hadn't been back in town an hour before she rushed a note up by messenger, and she's been bombarding me ever since—about two a day—been going on for a couple of weeks—don't know what to do about it. Clean off her head about me. She comes into money, though—oh, yes, I told you about it!

I say, old chap, do you mind if I ask you to clear out? I've got to dress and meet Edie Scott for tea at five—you don't mind, do you? . . . I thought you would understand it. Congrats again on your engagement to Ethel—she's a little brick. Good-bye, old chap—have another on your way out. See you soon. Call me up at the office.

THE HOSTESS'S STORY.

Why, Ethel dear, who wou'd ever have expected to meet you here at this hour? Have you had tea? It's awfully late, I know, but I haven't had a bit of lunch. . . . Oh, you haven't? Good. Let's go somewhere.

My dear, I'm just in town for the day. I haven't a rag to my back—one does get so dowdy stopping so much in the country. I've ordered a ton of things. That's a nice frock you have on—who made it? . . . Oh, really! M'm'm—would you trust her with any really good material? I'm awfully particular. Let's go in here. Of course—always my luck—not a table to be had. Oh, wait; there's one! Whew! I am tired. Had a crowd last week end! I'm a wreck. I'll tell you all about it as soon as I've had a cup of tea. Thank goodness, here it is! You pour—I haven't the energy of a mouse. I wish you and Irving would come down some time, but I suppose you won't—newly engaged couples would rather stay in town, even when it's deserted, and take bus rides on Sunday and hold each other's hands. . . . Well, if not quite that, something like it. . . . No, dear, no cream and sugar for me—it's fattening, so I've sworn off—wish I could get a brandy and soda instead. . . . No, dear, I know—you can't here. No, no bread and butter, either—starch is fattening, too; just a dry biscuit.

I'll hurry over my tale of woe about

last week end, because I want to talk clothes with you, if I have time before I rush for my train. Of course, you know, I have had an understanding with the Major for some time. . . . What? Oh, yes, dear, of course—I admit I have been flirting rather desperately with Douglas Sloane—not that I care a rap about him, but he's presentable, and I hear he has a tidy bit tucked away somewhere—not that anyone would know about it, for he is the stingiest man to take you out—when he *does*. It always puts the servants in bad tempers whenever they know he is coming down, he tips so badly. Anyway, the Major was getting a bit restive with my having Douglas so much at the house, so I thought something had better be done to put him off the scent. So I invited the least attractive girl I knew—I certainly wasn't going to throw Douglas at a good-looking girl, even if I *was* through with him—and that, of course, was Hilda Rathbone. My dear, I was going to ask *you*, but then I remembered you were just getting engaged. . . . Oh, Ethel, how hateful of you to take it like that—I didn't mean that, at all. Well, you know Hilda, how susceptible she is—let a man look at her twice and she is ready to fall on his neck. I don't like her at all, so I wrote her and said my party would be a flat failure if I could not count on her to come and stay the week end—clever me! So I made Douglas think I was getting very much upset over some imaginary gossip I had heard regarding his attentions to me and that the only way to stop all this talk was to have him openly devoted to someone else—you see, I didn't want him to know about my engagement to the Major, either—for, you know, it really isn't settled—and won't be until I am perfectly sure about the money. You know, dear girl, I am the least mercenary woman in the world, but one can't live on love alone nowadays, and though I am the plain, old-fashioned kind and don't go in for all this heartless intriguing—still, of course, I have to be a bit practical.

So I explained it all to Douglas and made him promise to devote himself

entirely to Hilda the whole time he was down there—for my sake, of course. It all worked like a charm. I pointed out to the Major on all occasions how devoted Douglas was in his attentions to Hilda, and that it ought to prove conclusively that he was most unjustly suspecting me when he thought I was flirting with Douglas. And Douglas really was getting on my nerves. To cut it short, my dear, Hilda and Douglas fell madly in love with each other, for I caught them in the drawing-room rapturously kissing each other in the dark. I made the Major look, too, and of course that settled the matter with him entirely. Poor Douglas! She is such a stupid, too; I think they will

make an excellent match. Oh, my dear, look at the time—I'll have to run for my train, after all. I am so glad to have had this little chat with you—most people are so designing and always with their minds on the main chance—I can't get along with them. Give my love to that dear boy Irving—I think you are a very lucky girl—your ring is a beauty. You must come and visit us after the Major and I are married—providing, of course, I find his finances are all right. Would you mind, dear, paying the tea check? I haven't any change, and I must rush or I'll lose my train—you don't mind, do you? . . . I thought you wouldn't. Good-bye, dear. Don't forget to remember me to Irving.



THE SUFFRAGETTE'S CREED

By EDITH HARMAN BROWN

I BELIEVE that woman is, in every respect, the equal of man.

I believe that the man who allows a woman to stand in a car should forfeit his vote.

2. I believe that woman should receive equal pay with man.

I believe that women should have shorter hours than men.

3. I believe that there should be no head to the family, the authority to be equally divided.

I believe that the man who fails to support his family is beneath contempt.

4. I believe in the vote for women, though it must be obtained through the shedding of blood.

I believe that if women had the vote the inhuman practice of vivisection would be abolished.

Finally, I believe in the total emancipation of woman, and the complete subjugation of man. I believe—I believe that's a mouse! Oh, Jack, come quick!

M A N E C H

Par ANDRÉ GEIGER

IL naquit dans une vieille maison, isolée comme toutes celles du Pays basque, mais plus solitaire que les autres de la commune, sur un contrefort de la montagne, au milieu des landes et des fougères où paissent les brebis.

Par le chemin étroit et raide, où ne peuvent passer que les chariots à roues massives, pleines comme des disques, on le descendit à l'église du village et il reçut le prénom de Jean, que la tradition chérira.

Pendant plusieurs mois, il teta, cria et dormit. Et ses frères et sœurs, en commençant à jouer avec le petit être, répétaient si souvent, parmi les bruits qui sortaient de leurs bouches rouges: "Manech . . . Manech, . . ." que la force obscure de son jeune cerveau groupa peu à peu dans ce diminutif toutes les premières sensations reçues des choses, et, insensiblement, Manech, ce fut lui.

Il se mit à marcher, et les objets de cuisine, landiers de la grande cheminée noire, pichets brillants du lait, bassines de cuivre et marmites où s'élaboraient les nourritures mystérieuses, puis les chiens—toutes choses proportionnées à sa taille—furent ses premières amitiés au milieu de l'ensemble du vaste monde, dont la complexité infinie s'offrait à ses yeux comme une grande toile confuse sans mouvement et sans profondeur.

Il pénétra parmi les champs qui, reserrés sur la pente au milieu de la solitude, entouraient la maison, eux-mêmes entourés de petits murs bas. Et l'écho de tous les bruits et des voix familiales au fond de son oreille délia peu à peu sa langue, où vibrait déjà la tendance ancestrale à combiner les sons. Il parla.

Alors la vie en lui se précipita avec une force merveilleuse. Il imitait les faits et gestes des personnes, escortait, accessoire minuscule, leurs travaux du logis. Rien ne troubloit sa quiétude au milieu du rythme des jours et des nuits, si ce n'est l'apparition très rare, et presque effrayante, d'un visage inconnu: pâtre ou contrebandier des alentours, voisine de quelque maison pareillement isolée dans les pâturages, ou le passage d'un homme en robe noire qu'on accueillait avec une façon particulière, allant chez les femmes jusqu'à offrir la plus belle chaise et chez les hommes jusqu'à ôter leur béret.

Il garda bientôt les vaches et les brebis. Les herbes, les cailloux, les nuages, les murmures du vent, de l'eau, de la montagne, toutes les voix de ce qui vibre, brille et palpite, toutes les harmonies de ces êtres *inanimés*, comme les voix humaines lui avaient appris à parler, lui enseignèrent à chanter. Et les airs lents et sonores, dont la cadence se règle aux lignes du paysage, à la marche des troupeaux, à la portée du son de vallée en vallée, ou de sommet en sommet, les airs immuables qui passent de génération en génération, jaillirent sur ses lèvres enfantines, avec le timbre du jeune âge encore incapable des émois profonds.

Mais, comme son être tout d'instinct persévérait ainsi vers les libres fins animales au sein de la nature, des puissances apparurent qui voulaient maîtriser cette jeune force vivante qu'était Manech.

Manech, le dimanche, redescendit vers l'église, comme il y était descendu autrefois les yeux aveugles, mais à présent, les yeux grands ouverts,

émerveillés par les splendeurs du culte si éclatantes à côté de l'humble logis et plus surprenantes même que les lumières des étoiles, que les ors et les pourpres du soleil, que l'argent des clairs de lune, et le cristal des sources, et le ciel, bleu et blanc comme la Vierge de Lourdes, parce qu'il ne les voyait pas tous les jours. L'homme vêtu de noir parlait à la foule sur un ton dominateur et pathétique qui ne ressemblait à celui de personne, et Manech sentait se plier en lui toute volonté, à l'idée que cet homme tenait le mystérieux pouvoir de jeter le malheur dans la vie des autres hommes qui sont vêtus et qui parlent comme tout le monde, et il avait la sensation en sa présence de n'être plus lui-même, anéanti à ce point que, pour M. le curé, il cessait d'être "Manech" pour devenir "Jean."

Et pareillement il n'était plus Manech, mais Dithurbide, du nom de la vieille maison familiale où il était né, pour l'autre maître qui, chaque jour, l'obligeait à descendre vers la classe, où les enfants en bérrets et sandales devaient s'enfermer. Ces heures-là semblaient à Manech une servitude dure, et il regrettait les sentiers, les brebis, les ajoncs en fleurs. La pluie, les froids, les travaux, les maladies se chargeaient heureusement de restreindre cet exil en bas de la montagne, et, après quelques années, tout cela disparut de sa vie.

Vers ce temps, l'accent de sa voix changea et, avec les jeunes gens, il jouait à la pelote, le dimanche, et buvait du vin dans les auberges. Sa voix nouvelle retentissait dans les solitudes en guidant l'attelage lent des bœufs au pelage jaunâtre. Il allait, souple et musclé, l'aiguillon en main, le foulard rouge au cou sur le chemise, aspirant à répandre hors de lui-même une énergie secrète. Et puis, un soir de juin, près d'une haie, il se trouva, joyeux, haletant, une fille dans les bras, et elle lui rendait ses baisers.

Il aimait, faisant à son tour l'éternel geste dont la création lui enseignait de toutes parts la loi, et davantage l'amour le rapprocha des bons animaux et des plantes fécondes, reliant plus étroite-

ment sa force obscure à l'ensemble infini des forces du monde.

— Ah! Manech . . . Manech . . . Manech . . . disait-elle.

— Ah! Mayie . . . Mayie . . . disait-il.

Et ils riaient comme des enfants d'accomplir l'œuvre des dieux.

Mais de nouveau voici que les puissances fatales qui dominaient ses libres instincts se saisirent de cette richesse qui était dans la vigueur de ses bras, et il partit soldat. Comme à l'école et à l'église, il se sentait hors de lui-même et comme transporté sur une autre planète, ayant l'illusion que Manech n'était pas mort seulement les dimanches soir quand, dans une petite auberge, il chantait, avec d'autres Basques, les airs de la patrie absente, cette patrie qui était pour lui des choses concrètes, la maison, ses bœufs et ses champs, sa maîtresse.

Puis, au retour, quand celle-ci fut devenue sa femme, il reprit les travaux du logis et de la terre, emporté plus que jamais dans le tourbillon des choses, naïvement laborieux et prolifique comme les bêtes dont les existences complétaient sa famille, et sans désormais agrandir l'idée de sa propre personne.

Rien ne troubla plus sa quiétude au rythme des jours et des nuits, et des saisons. Avec les vaches et les brebis, au milieu des landes et des fougères ou dans les labours étroits, enclos de petits murs et juchés sur les contreforts de la montagne, Manech continuait d'être Manech et, le soir, quand il revenait par le chemin qui surplombe au-dessus des ravins pleins d'ombre, et précédait, en chantant les airs immuables, le chariot à roues massives comme des disques, quand il rentrait à la vieille demeure isolée, au son lointain des cloches du village, c'était avec le même sentiment vague de repos fatal et d'abri naturel que les troupeaux, dont la longue file mugissante et bêlante ondulait entre les buissons d'ajoncs fleuris d'or. Les nuages, les bruits du vent, des eaux, la muette présence de la montagne, les ciels pleins d'étoiles ou de soleil étaient ses vrais compagnons, plutôt que les quelques voisins disséminés dans les alentours.

Mais chaque dimanche et chaque fête le ramenait vers l'église, la place de pelote et les auberges de son adolescence. Et l'amour du mystère mêlé de crainte, l'amour du jeu mêlé d'orgueil, l'amour du vin mêlé de désirs sensuels formaient la triple armature de son âme, fixée à tout jamais.

Des années passaient et des années. Autour de lui, chef de famille à la disparition des vieux, des petits Manech. Piarrech, Andrech, des petites Mayie, Cataline, Gachucha, apparus en ce monde tout près de l'étable, comme des enfants-dieux, et descendus aussitôt vers les fonts baptismaux, tetaient, criaient, dormaient, puis, en jouant avec les frères et les sœurs ainés qui répétaient leur nom, tâtonnaient, à la recherche de leur personne, et peu à peu apprenaient à se connaître.

Il les vit marcher, chacun à leur tour, et se baissa au niveau des landiers, des pichets à lait, des chiens fidèles et des chaises basses, pour s'adapter à leur taille et leur offrir de près, au milieu de la grande confusion du monde, l'image d'un être paternel.

Il les vit croître et imiter. Il entendit leurs voix se former au langage appris des êtres humains et au chant appris des harmonies de la nature.

Il les laissa prendre par les puissances que lui-même avait subies jadis; avec une soumission indifférente, il les remit à l'homme noir qui dispose des volontés

divines, qui peut écarter le malheur du logis et des étables, et au maître d'école qui dispute les enfants aux pluies, aux maladies, aux travaux manuels. Il entendit muer le son de leur voix et sut à leurs regards, à leurs rentrées furtives, à leurs gaiétés secrètes, qu'ils aimaiient à leur tour et répétaient ses hardies de l'ombre des haies. Il se souvenait! . . .

Mais, de jour en jour, le monde lui parut moins beau, moins vigoureux, moins fier, moins gai et moins tiède, comme si la beauté, la vigueur et la fierté, la gaieté et le feu qui s'en allaient de lui à son insu, s'échappaient aussi de tout.

Puis, au début d'un printemps qui recommençait l'éternel cycle de la naissance et de l'anéantissement des êtres et des choses, ce fut l'homme vêtu de noir,—un autre de visage, mais le même, de costume et de pouvoir,—qui monta, par le chemin étroit que Manech, nouveau-né, avait descendu, et vint lui rendre la visite de l'Eglise, après soixante-douze années.

Et dans la vieille maison isolée au pied de la grande montagne basque, Manech, qui s'était appelé aussi Jean et Dithurbide, qui avait été enfant, soldat, amoureux, citoyen, chrétien, père et vieillard, mourut, sans avoir jamais songé à la raison mystérieuse de son bref passage sur l'immense univers.



I M A G E

Par TOUNY-LERYS

TOI auprès de moi . . . un peu de soleil,
Peu, très peu-mais sur le paysage pareil
A, sur un visage un sourire.

Un peu de soleil à travers des branches,
Un peu de soleil sur ta nuque blanche...
Toi et moi, et puis du soleil . . . Et ne rien dire !

MY ACCOUNT

By BERTHA LOUISE RICKETTS

WHEN all the busy week is spent,
And my allowance, every cent,
Is vanished, too,
I sit me down to calculate
Until my week's account is straight
And settled true.

Let's see—I had an even ten,
And fifty cents, a dime and then
A cent or two—
We'll call it just eleven, for
Those hateful fractions I abhor,
And cannot do.

Now carfare, powder and a pair
Of slippers and a braid of hair—
A perfect match—
And sundries I've forgotten now,
But I must add them, anyhow,
With all dispatch.

Eleven six—they make in all,
And that is more, as I recall;
Than I possessed
When I began the week, and still
My purse contains a dollar bill—
Whence came the rest?

Oh, yes, I see; that makes it right;
But here's a dime, escaped my sight!
And now it's late!
So I'll just save it till some time
When I may need an extra dime
To balance straight.



WHAT the heart knows the mind may as well accept.

HAVOC

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Synopsis of Previous Chapters

Arthur Dorward, a young American journalist in Vienna, secures for his paper a great "beat"—a full account of the proceedings of a private conference between the Emperor and the Czar, written out by the Chancellor himself. He refuses to share his triumph with his friend David Bellamy, an English diplomatic agent, and attempts to get out of the country with his valuable papers. On the train with him is Bellamy, and also several Austrian secret service men. During the night Dorward is attacked by the Austrians, thrown from the train and his papers taken from him. Bellamy then plots to secure the papers for himself and enlists the help of Louise Idiale, a Servian opera singer, who proceeds at once to encourage the attentions of Von Behrling, in charge of the Austrian party.

VI

THE night was dark but fine, and the crossing smooth. Louise, wrapped in furs, abandoned her private cabin directly they had left the harbor, and had a chair placed on the upper deck. Von Behrling found her there, but not before they were nearly halfway across. She beckoned him to her side. Her eyes glowed at him through the darkness.

"You are not looking after me, my friend," she declared. "By myself I had to find this place."

Von Behrling was ruffled. He was also humbly apologetic. "It is those idiots who are with me," he said. "All the time they worry."

She laughed and drew him down so that she could whisper in his ear.

"I know what it is," she said. "You have secrets which you are taking to London, and they are afraid of me because I am a Servian. Tell me, is it not so? Perhaps, even, they think that I am a spy."

Von Behrling hesitated. She drew him closer toward her.

"Sit down on the deck," she continued, "and lean against the rail. You are too big to talk to up there. So! Now you can come underneath my rug.

Tell me, are they afraid of me, your friends?"

"Is it without reason?" he asked. "Would not anyone be afraid of you—if, indeed, they believed that you wished to know our secrets? I wonder if there is a man alive whom you could not turn round your little finger?"

She laughed at him softly.

"Ah, no!" she said. "Men are not like that nowadays. They talk and talk, but it is not much they would do for a woman's sake."

"You believe that?" he asked in a low tone.

"I do, indeed. One reads love stories—no, I do not mean romances, but in memoirs—memoirs of the French and Austrian courts—memoirs even written by Englishmen. Men were different a generation ago. Honor was dear to them then, honor and position and wealth, and yet there were many, very many, then who were willing to give all these things for the love of a woman."

"And do you think there are none now?" he whispered hoarsely.

"My friend," she answered, looking down at him, "I think that there are very few."

She heard his breath come fast between his teeth, and she realized his state of excitement.

"Mademoiselle Louise," he said, "my love for you has made me a laughing stock in the clubs of Vienna. I, the poverty-stricken, who have nothing but a noble name, nothing to offer you, have dared to show others what I think, have dared to place you in my heart above all the women on earth."

"It is very nice of you," she murmured. "Why do you tell me this now?"

"Why, indeed?" he answered. "What have I to hope for?"

She looked along the deck. Not a dozen yards away two cigar ends burned red through the gloom. She knew very well that they belonged to Streuss and his friend. She laughed softly.

"How they watch you, those men!" she said. "Listen, my friend Rudolph. Supposing their fears were true, supposing I were really a spy, supposing I offered you wealth and with it whatever else you might claim from me for the secret which you carry to England?"

"How do you know that I am carrying a secret?" he asked hoarsely.

She laughed. "My friend," she said, "with your two absurd companions shadowing you all the time and glowering at me, how could one possibly doubt it? The Baron Streuss is, I believe, the Chief of your Secret Service, is he not? To me he seems the most obvious policeman I ever saw dressed as a gentleman."

"You don't mean it!" he muttered. "You can't mean what you said just now!"

She was silent for a few moments. Someone passing struck a match, and she caught a glimpse of the white face of the man who sat by her side, strained now and curiously intense.

"Supposing I did?"

"You must be mad!" he declared. "You must not talk to me like this, mademoiselle. I have no secret. It is your humor, I know, but it is dangerous."

"There is no danger," she murmured, "for we are alone. I say again, Rudolph, supposing this were true?"

His hand passed across his forehead. She fancied that he made a motion as

though to rise to his feet, but she laid her hand upon his.

"Stay here," she whispered. "No, I do not wish to drive you away. You shall listen to me."

"But you are not in earnest!" he faltered. "Don't tell me that you are in earnest. It is treason. I am Rudolph Von Behrling, secretary to the Chancellor."

Again she leaned toward him so that he could see into her eyes.

"Rudolph," she said, "you are indeed Rudolph Von Behrling; you are indeed the Chancellor's secretary. What do you gain from it? A pittance! Many hours' work a day and a pittance. What have you to look forward to? A little official life, a stupid official position. Rudolph, here am I and there is the world. Do I not represent other things?"

"God knows you do!" he muttered.

"I, too, am weary of singing. I want a long rest—a long rest and a better name than my own. Don't shrink away from me. It isn't so wonderful, after all. Bellamy, the Englishman, came to me a few hours ago. He was Dorward's friend. He knew well what Dorward carried. It was not his affair, he told me, and interposition from him was hopeless, but he knew that you and I were friends."

"You must stop!" Von Behrling declared. "You must stop! I must not listen to this!"

"He offered me twenty thousand pounds," she went on, "for the packet in your pocket. Think of that, my friend. It would be a start in life, would it not? I am an extravagant woman. Even if I would, I dared not think of a poor man. But twenty thousand pounds is sufficient. When I reach London, I am going to a flat which has been waiting for me for weeks—15 Dover Street. If you bring that packet to me instead of taking it to the Austrian Embassy, there will be twenty thousand pounds and—"

Her fingers suddenly held his. She could almost hear his heart beating. Her eyes, by now accustomed to the gloom, could see the tumult which was

passing within the man reflected in his face. She whispered a warning under her breath. The two cigar ends had moved nearer. The forms of the two men were now distinct. One was leaning over the side of the ship by Von Behrling's side. The other stood a few feet away, gazing at the lights of Dover. Von Behrling staggered to his feet. He said something in an angry undertone to Streuss. Louise rose and shook out her furs.

"My friend," she said, turning to Von Behrling, "if your friends can spare you so long, will you fetch one of my maids? You will find them both in my cabin, Number 3. I wish to walk for a few moments before we arrive."

Von Behrling turned away like a man in a dream. Mademoiselle Idiale followed him slowly, and behind her came Von Behrling's companions.

The details of the great singer's journey had been most carefully planned by an excited manager who had received the telegram announcing her journey to London. There was an engaged carriage at Dover, into which she was duly escorted by a representative of the Opera syndicate, who had been sent down from London to receive her. Von Behrling seemed to be missing. She had seen nothing of him since he had descended to summon her maids. But just as the train was starting she heard the sound of angry voices, and a moment later his white face was pressed through the open window of the carriage.

"Louise," he muttered, "I am on fire! I cannot talk to you! I fear that they suspect something. They have told me that if I travel with you they will force their way in. Even now Streuss comes. Listen for your telephone tonight or whenever I can call you. I must think—I must think!"

He passed on, and Louise, leaning back in her seat, closed her eyes.

VII

BELLAMY, travel-stained and weary, arrived at his rooms at two o'clock on the following afternoon to find among a pile of correspondence a penciled mes-

sage awaiting him in a handwriting he knew well. He tore open the envelope.

DAVID DEAR—

I have just arrived, and am sending you these few lines at once. As to what progress I have made, I cannot say for certain, but there is a chance. You had better get the money ready and come to me here. If R. could only escape from Streuss and those who watch him all the time, I should be quite sure, but they are suspicious. What may happen I cannot tell. I do my best and I have hated it. Get the money ready and come to me.

LOUISE.

Bellamy drew a little breath and tore the note into pieces. Then he rang for his servant.

"A bath and some clean clothes quickly," he ordered. "While I am changing, ring up Downing Street and see if Sir James is there. If not, find out exactly where he is. I must see him within half an hour. Afterward, get me a taxicab."

The man obeyed with the swift efficiency of the thoroughly trained servant. In rather less than the time which he had stated Bellamy had left his rooms. Before four o'clock he had arrived at the address which Louise had given him. A commissionnaire telephoned his name to the first floor, and in a very few moments a pale-faced French man servant, in somber black livery, descended and bowed to Bellamy.

"Monsieur will be so good as to come this way," he directed.

Bellamy followed him into the lift, which stopped at the first floor. He was ushered into a small boudoir, already smothered with roses.

"Mademoiselle will be here immediately," the man announced. "She is engaged with a gentleman from the Opera, but she will leave him to receive monsieur."

Bellamy nodded. "Pray let mademoiselle understand," he said, "that I am entirely at her service. My time is of no consequence."

The man bowed and withdrew. Louise came to him almost directly from an inner chamber. She was wearing a loose gown, but the fatigue of her journey seemed already to have passed away. Her eyes were bright, and a

faint hectic color glowed in her cheeks.

"David!" she exclaimed. "Thank heaven you are here!"

She took both his hands and held them for a moment. Then she walked to the door, made sure that it was securely fastened, and stood there listening for a moment.

"I suppose I am foolish," she said, coming back to him, "and yet I cannot help fancying that I am being watched on every side since we landed in England. I detest my new manager, and I don't trust any of the servants he has engaged for me. You got my note?"

"Yes," he answered, "I had your note—and I am here."

The restraint of his manner was obvious. He was standing a little away from her. She came suddenly up to him; her hands fell upon his shoulders; her face was upturned to his. Even then he made no motion to embrace her.

"David," she whispered softly, "what I am doing—what I have done—was at your suggestion. I do it for you; I do it for my country; I do it against every natural feeling I possess. I hate and loathe the lies I tell. Are you remembering that? Is it in your heart at this moment?"

He stooped and kissed her.

"Forgive me," he said. "It is I who am to blame, but I am only human. We play for great stakes, Louise, but sometimes one forgets."

"As I live," she murmured, "the kiss you gave me last is still upon my lips. What I have promised goes for nothing. What he has promised is this—the papers tonight."

"Unopened?"

"Unopened," she repeated, dropping her own voice.

"But how is it to be done?" Bellamy asked. "He must have arrived in London when you did last night. How is it they are not already at the Embassy?"

"The Ambassador was commanded to Cowes," she explained. "He cannot be back until late tonight. No one else has the key to the treaty safe and Von Behrling declined to give up the docu-

ment to anyone save the Ambassador himself."

Bellamy nodded. "What about Streuss?"

"Streuss and the others are furious," Louise said. "Yet, after all, Behrling has a certain measure of right on his side. His orders were to see with his own eyes this envelope deposited in the safe by the Ambassador himself."

"He returns tonight!" Bellamy exclaimed quickly.

She nodded. "Before he comes," she declared. "I think the document will be in your hands."

"How is it to be done?"

"The report is written," she explained, "on five pages of foolscap. They are contained in a long envelope, sealed with the Chancellor's crest. Von Behrling, being one of the family, has the same crest. He has prepared another envelope, the same size and weight, and signed it with his seal. It is this which he will hand over to the Ambassador if he should return unexpectedly. The real one he has concealed."

"Is he here?" Bellamy inquired.

"Thank heaven, no!" she answered. "My dear David, what are you thinking of? He is not here and he dare not come here. You are to go to your rooms," she added, glancing at the clock, "and between five and six o'clock this evening you will be rung up on the telephone. A rendezvous will be given you for later on tonight. You must take the money there and receive the packet. Von Behrling will be disguised and prepared for flight."

Bellamy's eyes glowed.

"You believe this?" he exclaimed.

"I believe it," she replied. "He is going to do it. After he has seen you, he will make his way to Plymouth. I have promised—don't look at me, David—I have promised to join him there."

Bellamy was grave. "There will be trouble," he said. "He will come back. He will want to shoot you. He may be slow-witted in some things, but he is passionate."

"Am I a coward?" she asked, with a scornful laugh. "Have I ever shown fear of my life? No, David! It is not that of

which I am afraid. It is the memory of the man's touch; it is the look which was in your face when you came into the room. These are the things I fear—not death."

Bellamy drew her into his arms and kissed her. "Forgive me," he said. "At such times a man is a weak thing—a weak and selfish thing. I am ashamed of myself. I should have known better than to have doubted you for a moment. I know you so well, Louise, I know what you are."

She smiled. "Dear," she said, "you have made me happy. And now you must go away. Remember that these few minutes are only an interlude. Over here I am Mademoiselle Idiale, who sings tonight at Covent Garden. See my roses. There are two rooms full of reporters and photographers in the place now. The leader of the orchestra is in my bedroom, and two of the directors are drinking whiskies and sodas with this new manager of mine in the dining room. Between five and six o'clock this afternoon you will get the message. It is somewhere, I think, in the city that you will have to go. There will be no trouble about the money? Nothing but notes or gold will be of any use."

"I have it in my pocket," he answered. "I have it in notes, but he need never fear that they will be traced. The numbers of notes given for Secret Service purposes are expunged from everyone's memory."

She drew a little sigh. "It is a great sum," she said. "After all, he should be grateful to me. If only he would be sensible and get away to the United States or to South America! He could live there like a prince, poor fellow. He would be far happier."

"I only hope that he will go," Bellamy agreed. "There is one thing to be remembered. If he does not go, if he stays for twenty-four hours in this country, I do not believe that he will live to do you harm. The men who are with him are not the sort to stop short at trifles. Besides Streuss and Kahn, they have a regular army of spies at their bidding here. If they find out that he has

tricked them, they will hunt him down, and before long."

Louise shivered. "Oh, I hope," she exclaimed, "that he gets away! He is a traitor, of course, but he is a traitor to a hateful cause, and, after all, I think it is less for the money than for my sake that he does it. That sounds very conceited, I suppose," she added, with a faint smile. "Ah, well, you see, for five years so many have been trying to turn my head. No wonder if I begin to believe some of their stories. David, I must go. I must not keep Dr. Henschell waiting any longer."

"Tomorrow," he said, "tomorrow early I shall come. I am afraid I shall miss your first appearance in England, Louise."

The sound of a violin came floating out from the inner room.

"That is my signal," she declared, smiling. "Dr. Henschell was almost beside himself that I came away. I come, Doctor," she called out. "David, good fortune!" she added, giving him her hands. "Now go, dear."

VIII

BETWEEN the two men, seated opposite each other in the large but somewhat barely furnished office, the radical differences, both in appearance and mannerisms, perhaps also in disposition, had never been more strongly evident. They were partners in business and face to face with ruin. Stephen Laverick, senior member of the firm, although an air of steadfast gloom had settled upon his clean cut, powerful countenance, retained even in despair something of that dogged composure, temperamental and wholly British, which had served him well along the road to fortune. Arthur Morrison, the man who sat on the other side of the table, a Jew to his finger tips notwithstanding his altered name, sat like a broken thing, with tears in his terrified eyes, disordered hair and parchment pale face. Words had flown from his lips in a continual stream. He floundered in his misery, sobbed about it like a child. The hand of misfortune had

stripped him naked, and one man, at least, saw him as he really was.

"I can't stand it, Laverick—I couldn't face them all. It's too cruel, too horrible! Eighteen thousand pounds gone in one week, forty thousand in a month! Forty thousand pounds! Oh, my God!"

He writhed in agony. The man on the other side of the table said nothing.

"If we could only have held on a little longer! Unions must turn! They will turn! Laverick, have you tried all your friends? Think! Have you tried them all? Twenty thousand pounds would see us through it. We should get our own money back—I am sure of it. There's Rendell, Laverick. He'd do anything for you. You're always shooting or playing cricket with him. Have you asked him, Laverick? He'd never miss the money."

"You and I see things differently, Morrison," Laverick answered. "Nothing would induce me to borrow money from a friend."

"But at a time like this," Morrison pleaded passionately. "Everyone does it sometimes. He'd be glad to help you. I know he would. Have you ever thought what it will be like, Laverick, to be hammered?"

"I have," Laverick admitted wearily. "God knows, it seems as terrible a thing to me as it can to you! But if we go down, we must go down with clean hands. I've no faith in your infernal market, and not one penny will I borrow from a friend."

The Jew's face was almost piteous. He stretched himself across the table. There were genuine tears in his eyes.

"Laverick," he said, "old man, you're wrong. I know you think I've been led away. I've taken you out of your depth, but the only trouble has been that we haven't had enough capital, and no backing. Those who stand up will win. They will make money."

"Unfortunately," Laverick remarked, "we cannot stand up. Please understand that I will not discuss this matter with you in any way. I will not borrow money from Rendell or any friend. I have asked the bank and I have asked Pages, who will be our largest creditors.

To help us would simply be a business proposition, so far as they are concerned. As you know, they have refused. If you see any hope in that direction, why don't you try some of your own friends? For every one man I know in the House, you have seemed to be bosom friends with at least twenty."

Morrison groaned. "Those I know are not that sort of friends," he answered. "They will drink with you and spend a night out or a week end at Brighton, but they do not lend money. If they would, do you think I would mind asking? Why, I would go on my knees to any man who would lend us the money. I would even kiss his feet. I cannot bear it, Laverick! I cannot! I cannot!"

Laverick said nothing. Words were useless things, wasted upon such a creature. He eyed his partner with a contempt which he took no pains to conceal. This, then, was the smart young fellow recommended to him on all sides a few years ago as one of the shrewdest young men in his own particular department, a person bound to succeed, a money maker if ever there was one! Laverick thought of him as he appeared at the office day by day, glossy and immaculately dressed, with a flower in his buttonhole, boots that were a trifle too shiny, hat and coat, gloves and manner all imitation but all very near the real thing. What a collapse!

"You're going to stay and see it through?" he whined across the table.

"Certainly," Laverick answered.

The young man buried his face in his hands. "I can't! I can't!" he moaned. "I couldn't bear seeing all the fellows, hearing them whisper things. Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! Laverick, we've a few hundreds left. Give me something and let me out of it. You're a stronger sort of man than I am. You can face it—I can't! Give me enough to get abroad with, and if ever I do any good I'll remember it—I will indeed."

Laverick was silent for a moment. His companion watched his face eagerly. After all, why not let him go? He was no help, no comfort. The very sight of him was contemptible.

"I have paid no money into the bank for several days," Laverick said slowly. "When they refused to help us, it was, of course, obvious that they guessed how things were."

"Quite right, quite right!" the young man interrupted feverishly. "They would have stuck to it against the overdraft. How much have we got in the safe?"

"This afternoon," Laverick continued, "I changed all our cheques. You can count the proceeds for yourself. There are, I think, eleven hundred pounds. You can take two hundred and fifty, and you can take them with you—to any place you like."

The young man was already at the safe. The notes were between them, on the table. He counted quickly with the fingers of a born manipulator of money. When he had gathered up two hundred and fifty pounds, Laverick's hand fell upon his.

"No more," he ordered sternly.

"But my dear fellow," Morrison protested, "half of eleven hundred is five hundred and fifty. Why should we not go halves? That is only fair, Laverick. It is little enough. We ought to have had a great deal more."

Laverick pushed him contemptuously away and locked up the remainder of the notes.

"I am letting you take two hundred and fifty pounds of this money," he said, "for various reasons. For one, I can bear this thing better alone. As for the rest of the money, it remains there for the accountant who liquidates our affairs. I do not propose to touch a penny of it."

The young man buttoned up his coat with a hysterical little laugh. Such ways were not his ways. They were not within the limit of his understanding. But of his partner he had learned one thing, at least. The word of Stephen Laverick was the word of truth. He shambled toward the door. On the whole, he was lucky to have got the two hundred and fifty pounds.

"So long, Laverick," he said from the door. "I'm—I'm sorry." It was characteristic of him that he did not venture

to offer his hand. Laverick nodded, not unkindly. After all, this young man was as he had been made. "I wish you good luck, Morrison," he said. "Try South Africa."

IX

THE roar of the day was long since over. The rattle of vehicles, the tinkling of hansom bells, the tooting of horns from motor cars and cabs, the ceaseless tramp of footsteps, all had died away. Outside the streets were almost deserted. An occasional wayfarer passed along the flagged pavement with speedy footsteps. Here and there a few lights glimmered at the windows of some of the larger blocks of offices. The bustle of the day was finished. There is no place in London so strangely quiet as the narrow thoroughfares of the city proper as the hour grows toward midnight.

Laverick, who since his partner's departure had been studying with infinite care his private ledger, closed it at last with a little snap and leaned back in his chair. After all, save that he had got rid of Morrison, it had been a wasted evening. Not even he, whose financial astuteness no man had ever questioned, could raise from those piles of figures any other answer save the one inevitable one, the knowledge of which had been like a black nightmare stalking by his side for the last thirty-six hours. One by one during the evening his clerks had left him, and it was a proof not only of his wonderful self-control but also of the confidence which he invariably inspired, that not a single one of them had the slightest idea how things were. Not a soul knew that the firm of Laverick & Morrison was already practically derelict, that they had on the morrow twenty-five thousand pounds to find, neither credit nor balance at their bankers, and only eight hundred and fifty pounds in the safe.

Laverick, haggard from his long vigil, locked up his books at last, turned out the lights, and locking the doors behind him, walked into the silent street. Instinctively he turned his steps westward. This might well be the last night

on which he would care to show himself in his accustomed haunts, the last night on which he would mix with his fellows freely and without that terrible sense of consciousness which follows upon disaster. Already there was little enough left of it. It was too late to change and go to his club. The places of amusement were already closed. Tomorrow night both club and theaters would lie outside his world. He walked slowly, yet he had scarcely taken a dozen steps when, with a purely mechanical impulse, he paused by a stone-flagged entry to light a cigarette. It was a passage, almost a tunnel for a few yards, leading to an open space, on one side of which was an old churchyard—strange survival in such a part—and on the other the offices of several firms of stockbrokers, a Russian banker, an actuary. It was the barest of impulses which led him to glance up the entry before he blew out the match. Then he gave a quick start and became for a moment paralyzed. Within a few feet of him something was lying on the ground—a dark mass, black and soft—the body of a man, perhaps. Just above it a pair of eyes gleamed at him through the semi-darkness.

Laverick at first had no thought of tragedy. It might be a tramp or a drunkard, perhaps a fight, or a man taken ill. Then something sinister about the light of those burning eyes set his heart beating faster. He struck another match with firm fingers and bent forward. What he saw upon the ground made him feel a little sick. What he saw racing away down the passage prompted him to swift pursuit. Down the arched court into the open space he ran, himself an athlete, but mocked by the swiftness of the shadow-like form which he pursued. At the end was another street—empty. He looked up and down, seeking in vain for any signs of life. There was nothing to tell him which way to turn. Opposite was a very labyrinth of courts and turnings. There was not even the sound of a footfall to guide him. Slowly he retraced his steps, lit another match and leaned over the prostrate

figure. Then he knew that it was a tragedy indeed upon which he had stumbled.

The man was dead, and he had met with his death by unusual means. These were the first two things of which Laverick assured himself. Without any doubt a savage and terrible crime had been committed. A horn-handled knife of unusual length had been driven up to the hilt through the heart of the murdered man. There had been other blows, notably about the head. There was not much blood, but the position of the knife alone told its ugly story. Laverick, though his nerves were of the strongest, felt his head swim as he looked. He rose to his feet and walked to the opening of the passage, gasping. The street was no longer empty.

About thirty yards away, looking westward, a man was standing in the middle of the road. The light from the lamp post escaped his face. Laverick could see only that he was slim, of medium height, dressed in dark clothes, with his hands in the pocket of his overcoat. To all appearance he was watching the entry. Laverick took a step toward him—the man as deliberately took a step farther away. Laverick held up his hand.

"Hullo!" he called out, and beckoned.

The person addressed took no notice. Laverick advanced another two or three steps—the man retreated a similar distance. Laverick changed his tactics and made a sudden spring forward. The man hesitated no longer; he turned and ran as though for his life. In a few minutes he was round the corner of the street and out of sight. Laverick returned slowly to the entry.

A distant clock struck midnight. A couple of clerks came along the pavement on the other side, their hands and arms full of letters. Laverick hesitated. He was never afterward able to account for the impulse which prevented his calling out to them. Instead, he lurked in the shadows and watched them go by. When he was sure that they had disappeared, he bent once more over the body of the murdered man. Already that huddled-up heap was beginning to exer-

cise a nameless and terrible fascination for him. His first feelings of horror were mingled now with an insatiable curiosity. What manner of man was he? He was tall and apparently strong, fair, of almost florid complexion. His clothes were very shabby and apparently ready made. His mustache was upturned, and his hair was trimmed closer than is the custom among Englishmen. Laverick stooped lower and lower until he found himself almost on his knees. There was something projecting from the man's pocket as though it had been half snatched out—a large portfolio of brown leather, almost the size of a satchel. Laverick drew it out, holding it in one hand while with firm fingers he struck another match. Then, for the first time, a little cry broke from his lips. Both sides of the pocketbook were filled with banknotes. As his match flickered out, he caught a glimpse of the figures in the left hand corner—£500—great rolls of them! Laverick rose gasping to his feet. It was a new Arabian Nights, this—a dream—a continuation of the nightmare which had threatened him all day! Or was it, perhaps, the madness coming—the madness which he had begun only an hour or so ago to fear?

He walked into the gaslit streets and looked up and down. The mysterious stranger had vanished. There was not a soul in sight. He clutched the rough stone wall with his hands; he kicked the pavement with his heels. There was no doubt about it—everything around him was real. Most real of all was the fact that within a few feet of him lay a murdered man, and that in his hands was that brown leather pocketbook with its miraculous contents. For the last time Laverick retraced his steps and bent over that huddled-up shape. One by one he went through the other pockets. There was a packet of Russian cigarettes, an empty cardcase of chased silver and obviously of foreign workmanship, a cigarette holder stained with much use, but of the finest amber, with rich gold mountings. There was nothing else upon the dead man, no means of identification of any sort. Laverick

stood up, giddy, half terrified with the thoughts that went tearing through his brain. The pocketbook began to burn his hand; he felt the perspiration breaking out anew upon his forehead. Yet he never hesitated. He walked like a man in a dream, but his footsteps were steady and short. Deliberately and without any sign of hurry, he made his way toward his offices. If a policeman had come in sight up or down the street, he had decided to call him and to acquaint him with what had happened. It was the one chance he held against himself—the gambler's method of decision, perhaps, unconsciously arrived at. As it turned out, there was still not a soul in sight. Laverick opened the outer door with his latchkey, let himself in and closed it. Then he groped his way through the clerks' office into his own room, switched on the electric light and once more sat down before his desk.

He drew his shaded writing lamp toward him and looked around with a nervousness wholly unfamiliar. Then he opened the pocketbook, drew out the roll of banknotes and counted them. It was curious that he felt no surprise at their value. Banknotes for five hundred pounds are not exactly common, and yet he proceeded with his task without the slightest instinct of surprise. Then he leaned back in his chair. Twenty thousand pounds in Bank of England notes! There they lay on the table before him. A man had died for their sake; another must go through all his days with the price of blood upon his head—a murderer—a haunted creature for the rest of his life. And there on the table were the spoils. Laverick tried to think the matter out dispassionately. He was a man of average moral fiber—that is to say, he was honest in his dealings with other men because his father and his grandfather before him had been honest, and because the penalty for dishonesty was shameful. Here, however, he was face to face with an altogether unusual problem. These notes belonged, without a doubt, to the dead man. Save for his own interference, they would have been in the hands of his murderer. The use of them for a few

days could do no one any harm. Such risk as there was he took himself. That it was a risk he knew and fully realized. Laverick had sat in his place unmoved when his partner had poured out his wail of fear and misery. Yet of the two men it was probable that Laverick himself had felt their position the more keenly. He was a man of some social standing, with a large circle of friends, a sportsman, and with many interests outside the daily routine of his city life. To him failure meant more than the loss of money; it would rob him of everything in life worth having. The days to come had been emptied of all promise. He had held himself stubbornly simply because he was a man, because he had strength enough to refuse to let his mind dwell upon the indignities and humiliation to come. And here before him was possible salvation. There was a price to be paid, of course, a risk to be run in making use even for an hour of this money. Yet from the first he had known that he meant to do it.

Quite cool now, he opened his private safe, thrust the pocketbook into one of the drawers, and locked it up. Then he lit a cigarette, finally shut up the office and walked down the street. As he passed the entry he turned his head slowly. Apparently no one had been there, nothing had been disturbed. Straining his eyes through the darkness, he could even see that dark shape still lying huddled on the ground. Then he walked on. He had burned his boats now and was prepared for all emergencies. At the corner he met a policeman, to whom he wished a cheery good night. He told himself that the thing which he had done was for the best. He owed it to himself. He owed it to those who had trusted him. After all, it was the chief part of his life—his city career. It was here that his friends lived. It was here that his ambitions flourished. Disgrace here was eternal disgrace. His father and his grandfather before him had been men honored and respected in this same circle. Disgrace to him, such disgrace as that with which he had stood face to face a few hours ago, would have been, in a certain sense, a reflection upon their

memories. The names upon the brass plates to right and to left of him were the names of men he knew, men with whom he desired to stand well, whose friendship or contempt made life worth living or the reverse. It was worth a great risk—this effort of his to keep his place. His one mistake—this association with Morrison—had been such an unparalleled stroke of bad luck. He was rid of the fellow now. For the future there should be no more partners. He had his life to live. It was not reasonable that he should allow himself to be dragged down into the mire by such a creature.

He found an empty taxicab at the corner of Queen Victoria Street, and hailed it.

"Whitehall Court," he told the driver.

X

BELLAMY was a man used to all hazards, whose supreme effort of life it was to meet success and disaster with unvarying mien. But this was disaster too appalling even for his self-control. He felt his knees shake so that he caught at the edge of the table before which he was standing. There was no possible doubt about it, he had been tricked. Von Behrling, after all, Von Behrling, whom he had looked upon merely as a stupid, infatuated Austrian, ready to sell his country for the sake of a woman, had fooled him utterly!

The man who sat at the head of the table—the only other occupant of the room—was in court dress, with many orders upon his coat. He had just been attending a court function, from which Bellamy's message had summoned him. Before him on the table was an envelope, hastily torn open, and several sheets of blank paper. It was upon these that Bellamy's eyes were fixed with an expression of mingled horror and amazement. The Cabinet minister had already pushed them away with a little gesture of contempt.

"Bellamy," he said gravely, "it is not like you to make so serious an error."

"I hope not, sir," Bellamy answered. "I—yes, I have been deceived."

The minister glanced at the clock.
"What is to be done?" he asked.

Bellamy, with an effort, pulled himself together. He caught up the envelope, looked once more inside, held up the blank sheets of paper to the lamp and laid them down. Then with clenched fists he walked to the other side of the room and returned. He was himself again.

"Sir James, I will not waste your time by saying that I am sorry. Only an hour ago I met Von Behrling in a little restaurant in the city, and gave him twenty thousand pounds for that envelope."

"You paid him the money," the minister remarked slowly, "without opening the envelope?"

Bellamy admitted it. "In such transactions as these," he declared, "great risks are almost inevitable. I took what must seem to you now to be an absurd risk. To tell you the honest truth, sir, and I have had experience in these things, I thought it no risk at all when I handed over the money. Von Behrling was there in disguise. The men with whom he came to this country are furious with him. To all appearance, he seemed to have broken with them absolutely. Even now—"

"Well?"

"Even now," Bellamy said slowly, with his eyes fixed upon the wall of the room, and a dawning light growing stronger every moment in his face, "even now I believe that Von Behrling made a mistake. An envelope such as this had been arranged for him to show the others or leave at the Austrian Embassy in case of emergency. He had it with him in his pocketbook. He even told me so. God in Heaven, he gave me the wrong one!"

The minister glanced once more at the clock.

"In that case," he said, "perhaps he would not go to the Embassy tonight, especially if he was in disguise. You may still be able to find him and repair the error."

"I will try," answered Bellamy. "Thank heaven," he added, with a sudden gleam of satisfaction, "my watchers

are still dogging his footsteps. I can find out before morning where he went when he left our rendezvous. There is another way, too. Mademoiselle—this man Von Behrling believed that she was leaving the country with him. She was to have had a message within the next few hours."

The minister nodded thoughtfully. "Bellamy, I have been your friend, and you have done us good service often. The Secret Service estimates, as you know, are above supervision, but twenty thousand pounds is a great deal of money to have paid for this."

He touched the sheets of blank paper with his forefinger. Bellamy's teeth were clenched.

"The money shall be returned, sir."

"Do not misunderstand me," Sir James went on, speaking a little more kindly. "The money, after all, in comparison with what it was destined to purchase, is nothing. We might even count it a fair risk if it was lost."

"It shall not be lost," Bellamy promised. "If Von Behrling has played the traitor to us, then he will go back to his country. In that case, I will have the money from him without a doubt. If, on the other hand, he was honest to us and a traitor to his country, as I firmly believe, it may not yet be too late."

"Let us hope not," Sir James declared. "Bellamy," he continued, a note of agitation trembling in his tone, "I need not tell you, I am sure, how important this matter is. You work like a mole in the dark, yet you have brains,—you understand. Let me tell you how things are with us. A certain amount of confidence is due to you, if to anyone. I may tell you that at the Cabinet council today a very serious tone prevailed. We do not understand in the least the attitude of several of the European powers. They can be understood only under certain assumptions. A note of ours sent through the Ambassador to Vienna has remained unanswered for two days. The German Ambassador has left unexpectedly for Berlin on urgent business. We have just heard, too, that a secret mission from Russia left St. Petersburg last night for Paris.

Side by side with all this," Sir James continued, "the Czar is trying to evade his promised visit here. The note we have received speaks of his health. Well, we know all about that. We know, I may tell you, that his health has never been better than at the present moment."

"It all means one thing and one thing only," Bellamy affirmed. "In Vienna and Berlin today they look at an Englishman and smile. Even the man in the street seems to know what is coming."

Sir James leaned a little back in his seat. His hands were tightly clenched, and there was a fierce light in his hollow eyes. Those who were intimate with him knew that he had aged many years during the last few weeks.

"The cruel part is," he said softly, "that it should have come in my administration, when for ten years I have prayed from the Opposition benches for the one thing which would have made us safe today."

"An army," murmured Bellamy.

"The days are coming," Sir James continued, "when those who prated of militarism and the security of our island walls will see with their own eyes the ruin they have brought upon us. Secretly we are mobilizing all that we have to mobilize," he added, with a little sigh. "At the very best, however, our position is pitiful. Even if we are prepared to defend, I am afraid that we shall see things on the Continent in which we shall be driven to interfere, or else suffer the greatest blow which our prestige has ever known. If we could only tell what was coming!" he wound up, looking once more at those empty sheets of paper. "It is this darkness which is so alarming!"

Bellamy turned toward the door. "You have the telephone in your bedroom, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. Ring me up at any time in the night or morning, if you have news."

Bellamy drove at once to Dover Street. It was half past one, but he had no fear of not being admitted. Louise's French maid answered the bell.

"Madame has not retired?" Bellamy inquired.

"But no, sir," the woman assured him, with a welcoming smile. "It is only a few minutes ago that she has returned."

Bellamy was ushered at once into her room. She was gorgeous in blue satin and pearls. Her other maid was taking off her jewels. She dismissed both the women abruptly.

"I absolutely couldn't avoid a supper party," she said, holding out her hands. "You expected that, of course. You were not at the Opera House?"

He shook his head, and walking to the door, tried the handle. It was securely closed. He came back slowly to her side. Her eyes were questioning him fiercely.

"Well?" she exclaimed. "Well?"

"Have you heard from Von Behrling?"

"No," she answered. "He knew that I must sing tonight. I have been expecting him to telephone every moment since I got home. You have seen him?"

"I have seen him," Bellamy admitted. "Either he has deceived us both, or the most unfortunate mistake in the world has happened. Listen. I met him where he appointed. He was there, disguised, almost unrecognizable. He was nervous and desperate; he had the air of a man who has cut himself adrift from the world. I gave him the money—twenty thousand pounds in Bank of England notes, Louise—and he gave me the papers, or what we thought were the papers. He told me that he was keeping a false duplicate upon him for a little time, in case he was seized, but that he was going to Liverpool Street station to wait, and would telephone you from the hotel there later on. You have not heard yet, then?"

She shook her head. "There has been no message—but go on."

"He gave me the wrong document—the wrong envelope," continued Bellamy. "When I took it to—to Downing Street, it was full of blank paper."

The color slowly left her cheeks. She looked at him with horror in her face. "Do you think that he meant to do it?" she exclaimed.

"We cannot tell," Bellamy answered. "My own impression is that he did not. We must find out at once what has become of him. He might even, if he fancies himself safe, destroy the envelope he has, believing it to be the duplicate. He is sure to telephone you. The moment you hear you must let me know."

"You had better stay here," she declared. "There are plenty of rooms. You will be on the spot then."

Bellamy shook his head. "The joke of it is that I, too, am being watched wherever I go. That fellow Streuss has spies everywhere. That is one reason why I believe that Von Behrling was serious."

"Oh, he was serious!" Louise repeated.

"You are sure?" Bellamy asked. "You have never had even any doubt about him?"

"Never," she answered firmly. "David, I had not meant to tell you this. You know that I saw him for a moment this morning. He was in deadly earnest. He gave me a ring—a trifle—but it had belonged to his mother. He would not have done this if he had been playing us false."

Bellamy sprang to his feet. "You are right, Louise!" he exclaimed. "I shall go back to my rooms at once. Fortunately, I had a man shadowing Von Behrling, and there may be a report for me. If anything comes here, you will telephone at once?"

"Of course," she assented.

"You do not think it possible," he asked slowly, "that he would attempt to see you here?"

Louise shuddered for a moment. "I absolutely forbade it, so I am sure there is no chance of that."

"Very well, then," he decided, "we will wait. Dear," he added, in an altered tone, "how splendid you look!"

Her face suddenly softened. "Ah, David," she murmured, "to hear you speak naturally even for a moment—it makes everything seem so different!"

He held out his arms and she came to him with a little sigh of satisfaction.

"Louise," he said, "some day the

time may come when we shall be able to give up this life of anxiety and terrors. But it cannot be yet—not for your country's sake nor mine."

She kissed him fondly. "So long as there is hope!" she whispered.

XI

It seemed to Louise that she had scarcely been in bed an hour when the more confidential of her maids—Annette the Frenchwoman—woke her with a light touch of the arm. She sat up in bed sleepily.

"What is it, Annette?" she asked. "Surely it is not midday yet? Why do you disturb me?"

"It is barely nine o'clock, mademoiselle, but Monsieur Bellamy—mademoiselle told me that she wished to receive him whenever he came. He is in the boudoir now, and very impatient."

"Did he send any message?"

"Only that his business was of the most urgent," the maid replied.

Louise sighed—she was really very sleepy. Then, as the thoughts began to crowd into her brain, she began also to remember. Some part of the excitement of a few hours ago returned.

"My bath, Annette, and a dressing gown," she ordered. "Tell Monsieur Bellamy that I hurry. I will be with him in twenty minutes."

To Bellamy the twenty minutes were minutes of purgatory. She came at last, however, fresh and eager, her hair tied with ribbon, she herself clad in a pink dressing gown and pink slippers.

"David!" she cried. "My dear David!"

Then she broke off. "What is it?" she asked, in a different tone.

He showed her the headlines of the newspaper he was carrying. "Tragedy!" he answered hoarsely. "Von Behrling was true, after all—at least, it seems so."

"What has happened?" she demanded.

Bellamy pointed once more to the newspaper. "He was murdered last night, within fifty yards of the place of our rendezvous."

A little exclamation broke from Louise's lips. She sat down suddenly. The color called into her cheeks by the exercise of her bath was rapidly fading away. "David," she murmured, "is this true?"

"It is indeed," Bellamy assured her. "Not only that, but there is no mention of his pocketbook in the account of his murder. It must have been engineered by Streuss and the others, and they have got away with the pocketbook and the money."

"What can we do?" she asked.

"There is nothing to be done," Bellamy declared calmly. "We are defeated. The thing is quite apparent. Von Behrling never succeeded, after all, in shaking off the espionage of the men who were watching him. They tracked him to our rendezvous; they waited about while I met him. Afterward, he had to pass along a narrow passage. It was there that he was found murdered."

"But, David, I don't understand! Why did they wait until after he had seen you? How did they know that he had not parted with the paper in the restaurant? To all intents and purposes he ought to have done so."

"I cannot understand that myself," Bellamy admitted. "In fact, it is inexplicable."

She took up the newspaper and glanced at the report. Then, "You are sure, I suppose, that this does refer to Von Behrling? He is quite unidentified, you see."

"There is no doubt about it," Bellamy declared. "I have been to the morgue. It is certainly he. All our work has been in vain—just as I thought, too, that we had made a splendid success of it."

She looked at him compassionately. "It is hard lines, dear," she admitted. "You are tired, too. You look as though you had been up all night."

"Yes, I am tired," he answered, sinking into a chair. "I am worse than tired. This has been the grossest failure of my career, and I am afraid that it is the end of everything. I have lost twenty thousand pounds of Secret Service money; I have lost the one chance

which might have saved England. They will never trust me again."

"You did your best," she said, coming over and sitting on the arm of his chair. "You did your best, David."

She laid her hands upon his forehead, her cheek against his—smooth and cold—exquisitely refreshing as it seemed to his jaded nerves.

"Ah, Louise," he murmured, "life is getting a little too strenuous. Perhaps we have given too much of it up to others. What do you think?"

She shook her head. "Dear, I have felt like that sometimes, yet what can we do? Could we be happy, you and I, in exile, if the things which we dread were coming to pass? Could I go away and hide while my countrymen were being butchered out of existence? And you—you are not the sort of man to be content with an ignoble peace. No, it isn't possible. Our work may not be over yet—"

There was a knock at the door, and Annette entered with many apologies.

"Mademoiselle," she explained, "a thousand pardons, and to monsieur also, but there is a gentleman here who says that his business is of the most urgent importance, and that he must see you at once. I have done all that I can but he will not go away. He knows that Monsieur Bellamy is here, too," she added, turning to him, "and he says his business has to do with monsieur as well as mademoiselle."

Bellamy almost snatched the card from the girl's fingers. He read out the name in blank amazement. "Baron de Streuss!"

There was a moment's silence. Louise and he exchanged wondering glances. "What can this mean?" she asked hoarsely.

"Heaven knows!" he answered. "Let us see him together. After all—after all—"

"You can show the gentleman in, Annette," her mistress ordered.

"If he has the papers," Bellamy continued slowly, "why does he come to us? It is not like these men to be vindictive. Diplomacy to them is nothing

—a game of chess. I do not understand."

The door opened. Annette announced their visitor. Streuss bowed low to Louise—he bowed, also, to Bellamy.

"I need not introduce myself," he said. "With Mr. Bellamy I have the honor to be well acquainted. Madame is known to all the world."

Louise nodded, somewhat coldly. "We can dispense with an introduction, I think, Monsieur le Baron," she said. "At the same time, you will perhaps explain to what I owe this some-what unexpected pleasure."

"Mademoiselle, an explanation there must certainly be. I know that it is an impossible hour. I know, too, that to have forced my presence upon you in this manner may seem discourteous. Yet the urgency of the matter, I am convinced, justifies me."

Louise motioned him to a chair, but he declined with a little bow of thanks.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "and you, Mr. Bellamy, we need not waste words. We have played a game of chess together. You, mademoiselle, and Mr. Bellamy on the one side—I and my friends upon the other. The honor of Rudolph Von Behrling was the pawn for which we fought. The victory re-mains with you."

Bellamy never moved a muscle. Louise, on the contrary, could not help a slight start.

"Under the circumstances," the Baron continued smoothly, "the strug-
gle was uneven. I do myself the jus-tice to remember that from the first I realized that we played a losing game. Mademoiselle," he added, "from the days of Cleopatra—aye, and throughout those shadowy days which lie beyond—the diplomats of the world have been pow-erless when matched against your sex. Rudolph Von Behrling was an honest fellow enough until he looked into your eyes. Mademoiselle, you have gifts which might perhaps have driven from his senses a stronger man."

Louise smiled, but there was no sug-gestion of mirth in the curl of her lips. Her eyes all the time sought his ques-tioningly. She did not understand.

"You flatter me, Baron," she mur-mured.

"No, I do not flatter you; I speak the truth. This plain talking is pleasant enough when the time comes that one may indulge in it. That time, I think, is now. Rudolph Von Behrling, against my advice, but because he was the Chancellor's nephew, was associated with me in a certain enterprise, the nature of which is no secret to you, mademoiselle, or to Mr. Bellamy here. We followed a man who, by some strange chance, was in possession of a few sheets of foolscap, the contents of which were alike price-less to my country and priceless to yours. The subsequent history of those papers should have been automatic. The first step was fulfilled readily enough. The man disappeared—the papers were ours. Von Behrling was the man who secured them, and Von Behrling it was who re-tained them. If my advice had been followed, I admit frankly that we should have ignored all possible comment and returned with them at once to Vienna. The others thought differently. They ruled that we should come on to London and deposit the packet with our Ambass-ador here. In a weak moment I consented. It was your opportunity, mademoiselle—an opportunity of which you have splendidly availed yourself."

This time Louise held herself with composure. Bellamy's brain was in a whirl but he remained silent.

"I come to you both," the Baron con-tinued, "with my hands open. I come—I make no secret of it—I come to make terms. But first of all I must know whether I am in time. There is one question which I must ask. I ad-dress it, sir, to you," he added, turning to Bellamy. "Have you yet placed in the hands of your government the pa-pers which you obtained from Von Behrling?"

Bellamy shook his head.

The Baron drew a long breath of re-lief. Though he had maintained his *savoir-faire* perfectly, the fingers which for a moment played with his tie, as though to rearrange it, were trembling.

"Well, then, I am in time. Will you see my hand?"

"Mademoiselle and I," answered Bellamy, "are at least ready to listen to anything you may have to say."

"You know quite well," the Baron continued, "what it is that I have come to say, yet I want you to remember this: I do not come to bribe you in any ordinary manner. The things which are to come will happen; they must happen, if not this year, next—if not next year, within half a decade of years. History is an absolute science. The future as well as the past can be read by those who know the signs. The thing which has been resolved upon is certain. The knowledge of the contents of those papers by your government might delay the final catastrophe for a short while; it could do no more. In the long run, it would be better for your country, Mr. Bellamy, in every way, that the end come soon. Therefore, I ask you to perform no traitorous deed. I ask you to do that which is simply reasonable for all of us, which is, indeed, for the advantage of all of us.

"Restore those papers to me instead of handing them to your government, and I will pay you for them the sum of one hundred thousand pounds!"

"One hundred thousand pounds!" Bellamy repeated.

"One hundred thousand pounds!" murmured Louise.

There was a brief, intense pause. Louise waited, warned by the expression in Bellamy's face. Silence, she felt, was safest, and it was Bellamy who spoke.

"Baron," said he, "your visit and your proposal are both a little amazing. Forgive me if I speak alone with mademoiselle for a moment."

"Most certainly," the Baron agreed. "I will go away and leave you—out of the room, if you wish."

"It is not necessary," Bellamy replied. "Louise!"

The Baron withdrew to the window, and Bellamy led Louise into the farthest corner of the room.

"What can it mean?" he whispered. "What do you suppose has happened?"

"I cannot imagine. My brain is in a whirl."

"If they have not got the pocket-book," Bellamy muttered, "it must have gone with Von Behrling to the morgue. If so, there is a chance. Louise, say nothing; leave this to me."

"As you will," she assented. "I have no wish to interfere. I only hope that he does not ask me any questions."

They came once more into the middle of the room, and the Baron turned to meet them.

"You must forgive mademoiselle," said Bellamy, "if she is a little upset this morning. She knows, of course, as I know and you know, that Von Behrling was playing a desperate game, and that he carried his life in his hands. Yet his death has been a shock—has been a shock, I may say, to both of us. From your point of view," Bellamy went on, "it was doubtless deserved, but—"

"What, in God's name, is this that you say?" the Baron interrupted. "I do not understand, at all! You speak of Von Behrling's death! What do you mean?"

Bellamy looked at him as one who listens to strange words.

"Baron," he said, "between us who know so much there is surely no need for you to play a part. Von Behrling knew that you were watching him. Your spies were shadowing him as they have done me. He knew that he was running terrible risks. He was not unprepared, and he has paid. It is not for us—"

"Now, in God's name, tell me the truth!" Baron de Streuss interrupted once more. "What is it that you are saying about Von Behrling's death?"

Bellamy drew a little breath between his teeth. He leaned forward with his hands resting upon the table.

"Do you mean to say that you do not know?"

"Upon my soul, no!" replied the Baron.

Bellamy threw open the newspaper before him.

"Von Behrling was murdered last night, ten minutes after our interview."

(To be continued)

THE DRAMA AND THE OLD, OLD STORY

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

WHEN a young man, seeking to work his way through college, finds that he lacks sufficient funds to meet the daily demands of his gastric machinery, he usually assists himself financially by waiting on the table. When a college professor, on the other hand, finds that his salary is too meagre to permit of his dipping his pallid person in the copious diversions enjoyed by the more highly paid ignorami, he usually assists himself financially by writing pieces of dramatic criticism for the papers. And, as a rule, the professor makes just about as good a critic as the student does a waiter.

Scholastic opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, one cannot wish dramatic criticism on oneself any more than one can aspire to table waiting without having first served a "bus" apprenticeship. Balance of either tray or viewpoint can come only with practice. A mere deep reading of Ibsen or Mrs. Rorer can create neither a critic nor a waiter. There are, at present, at least a dozen and six professorial gentlemen exploiting their opinions of the theater from time to time in the public prints, and of this vast number there are but two—Mr. Brander Matthews and Mr. George Baker—who know in the least of what they are speaking. The balance are merely critical busses, who manage to gain a linotype outlet and quasi-dignity for their dramatic views only because of their willingness, rendered imperative by poverty, to work at the coolie labor rate of a fraction of a cent a word. These professorial dramatic criticisms are the strongest argument of which we know for the speedy and general increase of curriculum salaries.

Not long ago, one of these writers

sweepingly asserted that no drama could hold the modern playgoer's interest unless vibrant love were its leading motif. And in the same article, the erudite dramatic guide stated that, in his opinion, "Strife" and "Arsène Lupin" had been two of the most generally interesting plays of the last season. In each of these plays, it will be remembered that cardiac passion occupied about as vital a position as it fills in an Old Soldiers' Home. In another treatise, a brother professor has proclaimed the fact that, to be successful today, a play, no matter what its specific character, must contain a clean love story. Shades of "The Easiest Way"—of "Mid Channel!" And still another curriculum critic last season informed his public that no impressive play could be fashioned unless the dramatist saw to it that a woman's love was back of every turn in its action. What egregious rumble-bumble! As well assert that naught can be done in life unless there be a photograph of a lady in our watchcase; as well believe with the absinthed Marechal that all the world's but a big cozy corner; as well agree that all life, real or transposed to the footlights, must be bounded on the north by a kiss, on the south by the altar, and on the other two sides by twins. Love, of course, is an important, aye, probably the most important of the elements of drama, but it is not an inalienable and indispensable element. Drama is, or should be, life, and life, though ten thousand poets and petticoats protest, is not love alone. Some of the merriest, most interesting men I have known are what the ladies have called "cranky bachelors," and some of the most engrossing plays I have seen have contained other principal

dramatic nourishment than mere bread and cheese and kisses. No, there is no love rule that governs the drama, and no man, be he even a matinee-going college professor, may formulate one. The place for these sapient commentators on dramatic love is back in the classrooms, where they may freely and without fear of discovery or contradiction parade their pompous misinformation and theatrical sophistry before assemblages of listless, pimply-faced youths, whose knowledge of the drama has been gained chiefly in the front-row seats at the Anna Held shows and who will graciously pretend that they understand what the professors are endeavoring to talk about.

If the critic were inclined to judge all drama by the plays presented during the first month of the new season in New York, he might state positively that the love element always dominated the stage. For there were as many distinct species of affection shown in the initial productions as are revealed by the searchlight of a motor car suddenly sweeping across the dark end of the piazza of a summer resort hotel. In the first place, as a supplement of last year's vogue of love among the tiger skins, we were this season introduced to "*LOVE AMONG THE LIONS*," a farce comedy that is destined to make even Charles Frohman, its producer, smile before the season is over. "*LOVE AMONG THE LIONS*," contrary to the opinion one is likely to gain from its title, has nothing to do with the amours of the Chanticler of the jungle. Gleaned from a story of the same name by F. Anstey, who is to W. J. Locke what Gertrude Hoffman is to Eddie Foy, the play, constructed by Winchell Smith, has to do with Lorana De Castro, a young woman who longs for newspaper notoriety even more violently than Nora Stanton Blatch, and who tells her lover she will marry him only on condition that the wedding ceremony take place in a cage of lions. Lest a narration of the comparatively simple manner in which the young man eventually gets out of his difficulty, however, lead many a worthy but love-lorn young fellow to make rash promises to his fiancée and thus hasten the

hour of his leap off the end of the dock into a Harlem flat, the rest of the story of Lorana and her Theodore will be omitted here. As an evening's entertainment, I accord my complete and unqualified indorsement to this somewhat fragile, yet clean and laugh-filled farce.

"*THE BRASS BOTTLE*," a second of F. Anstey's farcical fantasies, was brought into the Lyceum Theater by Mr. Frohman in the same week. When one goes to this play, one wants to be sure to take two things with him, an imagination and a pair of opera glasses. Without the first it will be impossible to appreciate the play fully, and without the second it will be impossible to appreciate the pulchritude of Miss Irene Fenwick fully. The latter is the newest of the Frohman leading women, being an importation from Piccadilly via Philadelphia, and is a member of the Ferguson-Burke-Doro-Chase Chorus Alumnae association. "*THE BRASS BOTTLE*" tells the story of a poor architect who buys the object of the title at an auction sale, who uncorks it and finds an Arabian Nights genie inside, and who is forthwith deluged with an embarrassment of riches by the grateful prisoner whom he has liberated. While the piece is novel in idea and treatment, its action is frequently retarded by unnecessary prolix garrulity, yet the sheer oddness of the entertainment should appeal to the jaded two-dollar taste. As I have said, however, a working imagination is essential to the enjoyment of the play. A finicky eye and conglutinated fancy may fail to agree that a *papier-maché* mule with the ability to speak can have its vocal chords in the wings instead of in its throat; that the genie has really disappeared back into the bottle when part of his robe can be seen sticking out of the trapdoor fireplace; and that a miracle transforming the architect's humble quarters into a Hindoo palace should be wrought by nothing more mystic than plainly discernable stage hands in shirt sleeves. If you have an imagination, however, go to "*THE BRASS BOTTLE*" and give it a real airing, which, if you missed the exquisite "*Peter Pan*," it probably has not had

since the days of "Superba," "Fantasma" and the other dear old Devil vs. Fairy theatrical tournaments. Richard Bennett plays the architect and Edwin Stevens the genie.

P.S. Late diners are warned that Miss Fenwick is on the stage when the curtain goes up.

PATRICIA O'BRIEN, the slang slinger of the Moonlight Maids company, made James Forbes's first comedy, "The Chorus Lady." Bob Blake, the slang seller of a cloak and suit company, made James Forbes's second comedy, "The Traveling Salesman." And Sammy Fletcher, the slang seeker of Broadway chorus girls' company, makes James Forbes's third and latest comedy, "THE COMMUTERS." When Fletcher is on the stage, "THE COMMUTERS" is as lively as the bustling city; when Fletcher is not on the stage, "THE COMMUTERS" is as lively as New Rochelle. There is real comedy, real character in this role of the highballed New York bachelor marooned in a sarsaparilla suburban community so far away from his beloved electric stamping ground that he cannot even see the light on top of the Metropolitan Tower. And as interpreted by Taylor Holmes, it never for a moment fails to convince, appeal and amuse. While the weave of the rest of the play is inferior to that of Mr. Forbes's two other decisive successes, the comedy contains sporadic flashes of the wholesome Forbes wit, strokes of the effective Forbes character brush and traces of the playwright's familiar ingenuity that merit appreciative notice. Taylor Holmes, as suggested, is excellent as the bibulous bachelor; Orrin Johnson is not as Larry Brice; and Miss Georgie Lawrence, save for one thing, is quite agreeably picturesque as the cook who longs to be back at Childs's. Like many other performers who are called on to play coarse character parts, Miss Lawrence hesitates to immerse herself completely in the role and seeks every once in a while to convince her auditors that, ex officio, she is really "refined" by interpolating such foreign pronunciations as "Nyou York" into

the servant's correctly vulgar manner of expression. The drawing-room may call it "Nyou," but in the kitchen it goes as "Noo," the sound being blown out after the enunciating method of cows. Henry B. Harris has mounted the comedy in characteristic good taste.

GODFRIED PLITTERSDORF was a poor reform politician in that sadder section of Brooklyn known as Williamsburg, who got the bare necessities of life from a well-to-do sister-in-law and lived in a mansion that made the residences of the Fifth Avenue millionaires look like hovels. Which demonstrated that Godfried's stage producer was so much more sympathetic and kind-hearted than Godfried's dramatic creators. But, then, what are a couple of playwrights between friends? And besides, what's the use of spending a thousand dollars on two new interior sets to represent a poor man's living quarters when you have the court chamber of Windsor Castle and the throne room of the palace at Versailles in the storehouse? Substitute a few tarnished sconces for regal chandeliers and replace the throne with a mantelpiece and let it go at that! Wilhelm Jacoby and Arthur Lipshitz, the playwrights, were across the sea in Germany; most of the regular New York theatergoers were still across sea in Paris; and the police court reporters who review the drama for the newspapers in summer would surely never know the difference. They didn't. And that is why Louis Mann, one of the two best dialect actors in America, appeared at the Lyric Theater through the torrid season in a very poorly staged, yet withal very decidedly amusing, comedy known in the original as "Der Doppel-mensch" and in the adapted version as "THE CHEATER." Go to "THE CHEATER," keep your eyes shut, and you will laugh long and loud. Open your eyes, behold the scenic foot slips and you will only grin.

"THE MARRIAGE OF A STAR," an adaptation of the French play of the same name by Alexandre Bisson and Georges Thurner, was presented at the Hackett Theater with Miss Clara Lipman in the

leading role. The rumor that Miss Lipman adapted the play for her own use is given convincing color through the circumstance that every few moments during its action some one of the characters has been made to make rapturous comment on the star's "wonderful youth," "dazzling beauty," and similar entirely absent qualities. Miss Lipman is a capable actress, a very capable actress, but when she selects dramatic vehicles for her own use she should not be too, *à la* Leslie Carter, insistent that divine beauty be verbally bestowed upon her in every third speech. A New York theater audience may or may not have brains, but it always, always has eyes. And often opera glasses. The action of the play concerns the sudden explosion of a young fellow's passion for the mother of his fiancée. All the perfumes of Arabia or adaptation cannot wipe away the taint from such a story. The physical side of the production evidences very good taste.

ALL Zoe Blundell's troubles in "Mid Channel," you remember, were due to the fact that she had no babies. All Zoie Hardy's troubles in "BABY MINE" are due to the fact that she has too many of them. Which indicates clearly the difference between drama and farce. In drama, a baby usually stands for pacification and reconciliation; in farce, a baby usually stands for just the opposite. "BABY MINE," written by Miss Margaret Mayo, produced at Daly's by William A. Brady, and presented by a company headed by Miss Marguerite Clark, is an extremely ludicrous succession of events that follow the efforts of a very young wife to win back her wrathful husband by writing him that she has become a mother when, in reality, the stork has not even looked up her telephone number. Hubby, as is popular under the circumstances, comes dashing wildly back home and wifey, having permitted a foundling asylum, rather than nature, to take its course, presents him with the customary "bouncing" baby. While a survey of the story of the farce might lead one to infer that it is nothing more than an exploitation of obstreper-

ous obstetrics, and while such might actually have been the case had less forethought been exercised in the casting of the piece, as matters stand there remains scarcely a vestige of objectionable colloquy or incident in the presentation. The role of the fibbing girl wife, as played in a truly delicious manner by little Miss Clark, is stripped by virtue of the latter's natural half-child, half-woman personality of its every suspicion of vulgarity and suggestiveness. In the event of an older, more mature player having been selected for the role, this undeniably could not have been the case. Ernest Glendinning, another player of satisfactorily obvious youth, plays the part of the young husband and, save for a tendency to expectorate his words, is nicely suited to the role. Walter Jones, as the baby miner, the man who digs them up for Zoie's purposes, brings a broad, yet eminently funny, interpretation to that character, but the acting of Miss Ivy Troutman, as his wife and schemer-in-chief, places one under the impression that this young lady opines she is appearing in a "society" play. And "BABY MINE" is quite assuredly not a society play—unless the society attribute be that for the prevention of cruelty to children. For lots and lots of New York youngsters are going to be left at home these nights to cry themselves to sleep 'mid the terrors of darkness while their selfish parents are getting stomachache from laughing down at Daly's.

THE Globe Theater opened with a so-called "summer singing and dancing frolic," by William Le Baron and Deems Taylor, called "THE ECHO." Miss Bessie McCoy is the featured player and, which is not always the case, deserves to be. Miss McCoy is one of the most thoroughly captivating personalities on our music show stage. She is the only singing and dancing lady in our theaters today who can make me completely forget a poor libretto, a German comedian, a severe headache and similar ailments. The entertainment as a whole is entertainment, because Miss McCoy is with us most of the time.

MEREDITH'S SWAN SONG

By H. L. MENCKEN

IT is but another proof of a lack of intelligible purpose in the cosmic process that George Meredith was not permitted to finish his last novel, "CELT AND SAXON," which has just come from the press (*Scribners*, \$1.50), without tail or hind legs, as he left it when he laid down his pen forever. Meredith was full of years and honors and ripe for the reaper's scythe, but I am convinced, for all that, that the angels were not so all fired eager to claim him that a wait of a few months more would have tortured them unduly. In so short a time, had it been vouchsafed to him, he might have turned "CELT AND SAXON" into the most delightful comedy imaginable. As it is, we must be content with half of that comedy—and a rough draft of the third quarter. The fourth quarter is missing entirely, and we can only guess what elaborate drolleries he intended to put into it. When we part from its people—and one of them is Meredith's best Irishman—nay, one of the best Irishmen in all latter day fiction—they are unanimously in perilous and interesting postures. One of them trembles upon the brink of marriage; another has just missed a throne; a third faces a battle royal with his wife; a fourth is lost in the Balkans, with a miniature pressed to his bosom; a fifth, having inherited millions, is about to enter the peerage. What actually happens to them? Alas, we shall never know!

The title of the story sufficiently explains its theme. It is a study of the abysmal differences, moral, intellectual and especially emotional, which separate the stolid Saxon from the wild Celt. Who but a wild Celt such as Patrick

O'Donnell would ever invade an English gentleman's country house to plead the cause of his enamored brother? That brother, whose name is Philip, is a captain in the British army, and has just returned from service in Canada, while Patrick himself has just come back from Paris, where the Jesuits have been teaching him philosophy, square dancing and the use of the foils. One glance at Philip is enough to convince Patrick that vain dreams of the beauteous Adiante Adister have been undermining his brother's constitution; and so he posts off to the Adister mansion, on the border of Wales, to convince the hunkerous and reluctant Adister *père* that a Catholic son-in-law will do him no dis-honor. Adister *père* is impressed by Patrick's eloquence and more by his complete self-possession, but it is too late—for Adiante, fickle maid, has bestowed her beauty and fortune, if not her heart, upon a preposterous Balkan adventurer, a claimant to some obscure and loathsome throne, a figure out of an Indianapolis best seller, and is even now looking forward to wearing a crown, and what is more lamentable, to providing that crown an heir.

Patrick, overwhelmed by these tidings, begs for a portrait of the faithless one, to help him break the news of her treason more gently. Philip, to Brother Pat's surprise, takes it very calmly. It is, in fact, not news to him at all. He has known of Adiante's incredible alliance with that infernal scoundrel, that noisome hooknose, for nearly a year, and has begun to get over it. As a British officer, he is rather amused by his brother's playing of John Alden; as an Irishman, he is reduced to tears. Pat-

rick himself takes the anti-climax with tolerable cheer. He has become mightily interested in the young woman of the miniature, and after certain aimless philanderings with other damsels, he disappears from London and is next heard of as traveling somewhat vaguely in Eastern Europe, where lies the kingdom to which the unmentionable hook-nose aspires and over which the bright eyes of the miniature may one day shed their penetrating rays.

But we do not miss Patrick, for his cousin Con—Captain Con O'Donnell, of His Majesty's army, retired—takes his place upon the scene, and Con is a sheer delight. He, too, has aspired to the hand of a she-Adister, but with more success than Captain Philip, for the fair object of his hopes—she is the treacherous Adiante's aunt—has capitulated, and is even now his wife's banker and guardian. It is out of the domestic relations of this fantastic couple that Mr. Meredith fashions some of his most delicious passages of comedy. Captain Con, to the outward eye, is a sedate and God-fearing Londoner, a director of companies, an advocate of the Union, the husband of one wife; but inwardly he is a wild, wild Irishman, dreaming of Ireland's freedom and brooding upon her wrongs. On the roof of his house he has built a small cabin as a theater for his secret treasons. "Here," he says to his fellow sinners, "you can unfold, unbosom, explode, do all you like, except caper, and there's a small square of lead between the tiles outside for that if the spirit of the jig comes upon you with violence; and I have had it on me, and eased myself mightily there to my own music—and the capital of the British Empire below me. . . . Here we roll like dogs in carrion, and no one to sniff at our coats. Here we sing treason; here we flout reason; night is our season at half past ten!"

Happy sinner! Happy in his whispered sacrileges, his odes to freedom, his secret palavers with the Irish apple-woman from the corner! Happy, even, in his right-angled Saxon wife, with her gray curls, her interminable dinners, her firm faith in the divine right of the

Saxon to rule. Toward the end Con plans his grandest and boldest crime. He will sneak into Ireland—lying to his wife about his destination—beat up the peasantry, demand their suffrages as an O'Donnell's right—and come back to London an Irish M. P., the cloven hoof shamelessly displayed. Thus we leave him, and sorry, indeed, is the parting! The hand of the novelist has been trembling for fifty pages; the curtain comes down abruptly, as it came down upon Macklin's palsied and speechless Shylock.

But there is no trace of the valetudinarian in the first half of the chronicle. The story of Patrick's invasion of the ancestral stronghold of the Adisters, of his dialectic encounters with the intransigent chief of that clan, of the latter's horror when he finds that he is about to become the grandfather of a hooknosed princeling, of Patrick's trembling return to London, of Captain Con's cabin on the roof and the sinister doings therein—this story is told with inexhaustible gusto and humor. The characters stand out in the round; they move and breathe; even the lesser ones are so real that there is a pang as each disappears. Mr. Meredith, of course, was never a plotmaster. He always wandered a good deal between cover and cover, and he does so here, stopping at one place for a whole chapter to sketch the habitual emotions and processes of ratiocination of John Bull—a capital essay upon English traits. As for the style of the tale, it is infinitely complex and glittering—an intricate fabric of brilliant threads woven in strange but delightful designs. The metaphor which rolls from the Meredith pen is never the one honored by ancient custom. The reader is incessantly tickled by new whimsicalities, unprecedented collocations of ideas, novel and ingenious adjectives. And with it all there is no mark of that painful striving, that elaborate effort to avoid the commonplace, which puts tediousness into so many pages of Henry James. The Meredithian prose is Elizabethan in its apparent *naïvete*, its impudence, its lawlessness. One pictures the au-

thor rolling in words as a cat rolls in catnip. Here, indeed, was a man who understood to the full the wonderful fluency and elasticity of that noblest of human inventions, the English language. What joy he must have got out of writing it!

"A MOTLEY," by John Galsworthy (*Scribners, \$1.50*), is a collection of stories, studies and impressions much like that published under the title of "A Commentary" two years ago. There is great variety in the collection, and its merit is by no means level from cover to cover; but its high places are very high indeed, for Mr. Galsworthy is a man who gazes upon the world and its people with a seeing eye, and he has the faculty of making all of us interested in the things he sees. The first sketch in the book is a remarkably incisive character study of an English solicitor of the old school—"that rather rare thing, a pure-blooded Englishman, having no strain of Scotch, Welsh, Irish, or foreign blood in his pedigree for four hundred years." We are introduced to this sturdy ancient as he passes into his eighth decade, and in a few pages a strangely rotund and lifelike portrait of him is set before us. The sketch, in truth, is a little masterpiece—a bit of writing more French than English in its exquisite workmanship, its economy of words, its purity of form. Altogether, there are twenty-eight such fragments in the book: one an acute study of a clergyman at odds with his flock, another a sort of flashlight picture of a Frenchman, yet another a grim little comedy of the literary life. Some are mere footnotes, impressions of the moment, attempts to fix a transient mood. But in every one of them, great and little, one notes a certain delicate artistry, a feeling for form and color, the touch of a journeyman's hand. Decidedly a book worth reading.

"NEITHER Do I," by Elizabeth Adamson Redford (*Cochrane, \$1.50*), is an attempt to make Mary of Magdala one of the most human personages in the Biblical narrative, the bloodless

heroine of a moral tale. The book is bound hideously in navy blue, with garish gilt stamping, and is embellished with a portrait of the author, several views of the Holy Land and a number of atrocious drawings. A prefatory note by the publishers imparts the information that the author is the daughter of an eminent Wesleyan ecclesiastic, that she has spent the past fourteen years in globe trotting, and that her story is "full of pathos, fire and fervor." Nothing of the sort. It is really not half so bad as all that. Here and there, of course, one happens upon the lush, unconscious humor which every Sunday school story shows, but in other places Miss Redford writes very well indeed. Her account of the raising of Lazarus, for example, is done in straightforward, simple and dignified English and is not without a considerable impressiveness.

The Biblical romance, of course, is bound to offend good taste in some way or other, for only persons whose taste is doubtful engage in its manufacture. Those of us who have more delicate literary palates are satisfied to accept the Scriptural narrative as it stands, without any effort to fill up its gaps and reconcile its contradictions. It is, in the authorized English version, the most beautiful piece of writing in the world—not the most scientific, perhaps, nor even the most convincing, but certainly the most beautiful. Its words fall into musical phrases which flow onward and onward in an endless, ever enchanting stream, rising here to passionate *fortissimo* and falling here to whispering, wavering *piano*. Compared to this, the music of Shakespeare's blank verse is brassy and blatant, Addison's prose is a street tune played upon a penny whistle and Marlowe's mighty line is sheer cacophony. No one will ever write better English than that of the synoptic gospels and no one will ever tell a story better than these nameless ancients tells theirs. All attempts to adorn it and elucidate it, to tell it better than it is told in the sacred text, are so many proofs of a bumptious egotism, a childish folly. The preachers of sermons, the authors of commentaries, the man-

ufacturers of Biblical novels, these folk awaken my awe if not my respect. They are worse, indeed, than that incredibly bombastic and fatuous Viscount Lansdowne, who once made a new version of "The Merchant of Venice" on the ground that the original was lacking in poetry. In literary sacrilege they speak the last word.

Now comes "THE GOSSAMER THREAD," by Venita Seibert (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.25), a series of studies of the imaginative, day dreaming period of childhood. Velleda, the eldest of five, is the central figure—little Velleda who discovers that Alte Pelznichol is only Onkel in a hempen beard and whose heart swells with elderly pride when she is warned that she "mustn't tell the children," but who still finds it perfectly possible to believe in a Different World and to fare into it upon great adventures. Naturally enough, Velleda's Onkel and her Tante Margarethe and Tante Hildegarde are German folk, for it is out of Germany that all the poetry of childhood has come. The Germans invented Kris Kringle and his spangled tree, the Easter rabbit and his chromatic eggs; they have given the world nine tenths of its fairy tales; they have been writing its lullabies for ages. A fat, a beery, a booming, a maudlin race—but after all, one may venture, the most human race under the sun!

IT is the brisk story of a pushing and successful career that John Adams Thayer tells in "ASTIR" (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.20), a sort of business autobiography. Mr. Thayer began life as a New England printer, went from the printer's case to the type foundry, became a virtuoso of typography, set up shop as an advertising man, drove Peruna from the *Ladies' Home Journal*, doubled the business of the *Delineator*, was hired and fired by the founder of *Munsey's*, and then became one of the proprietors of *Everybody's* and had a hand in snaring Tom Lawson and his famous series of articles on "Frenzied Finance." Mr. Thayer has many interesting tales to tell of the millionaires

who own the big magazines—of Frank A. Munsey, that one-man crowd; of George W. Wilder, head of the \$12,000,000 Butterick Company; of Cyrus K. Curtis, father of the *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, and of other periodical plutocrats. Naturally enough, as a self-respecting advertising man, he has a low opinion of editors and of the unspeakable drivel they provide for the pages between the advertisements. "Editors," he says, "do not make magazines financially successful." It may be, perchance—but all the same, I venture to hang up a purse of \$2.50, the which purse will go to Mr. Thayer whenever he supplies me with the name of one successful magazine in all the world which does not owe two thirds of its success to its editors.

MAURICE HEWLETT is making progress. A few months ago he was elected a charter member of the new British Academy of Immortals along with Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, Sir Arthur Wing Pinero and Viscount Morley; and now comes a new book, not *by* him but *about* him. Very few authors, while they are yet capable of enjoying the sensation, have books written about them. Joseph Conrad still lacks that distinction, and George Moore has so far got no further than half a book, the rest of which, strangely enough, is given over to George Bernard Shaw. This Hewlett volume is by Milton Bronner (*Luce*, \$1.25) and it presents a brief biography of its subject and critical chapters upon all his books. Mr. Bronner, naturally enough, believes that Hewlett is a novelist of high rank, but all the same he is very far from a mere singer of praises. There is blame as well as praise in his criticism, and in more than one place it shows considerable acuteness. Incidentally, the biography reveals the fact that, despite his apparent intimacy with Italian thought and manners, Hewlett has visited Italy but rarely and then only for short periods. Well, why not? The most realistic descriptions of Hell in the language must be credited to ecclesiastics who had not yet got there when they wrote.

SHOPPING FOR THE SMART SET

By MARION C. TAYLOR

IN spite of the host of fashion rumors one hears—September, the first part anyway—is too early for anything really authentic and most of the models shown are adaptions of the late summer successes of Paris and the Continent, a trifle changed to suit the season, and with these we are forced to content ourselves for a month or so until we see what is going to happen. Ofttimes one finds among these early models a really charming point which lasts throughout the season, but usually they are but transitory styles and forgotten before the winter is over. The most that they can hope is to hint of winter possibilities and bridge the gap between the seasons.

But early though it is, there are a few points we may safely consider settled—one is, that coats are to be short—if anything shorter than in the spring. I doubt if we shall see any longer than the hip and I wouldn't be at all surprised to see the "Spencer jacket," a mode of a generation ago, revived to popularity. I saw one or two of them this spring and thought them very smart indeed—both were black satin, and one had large pointed revers of a pekin striped silk and frilly web like batiste ruffles in front—a typically incroyable effect.

I also feel certain that we have seen the end of the extremely narrow skirt—many of the new tailored models show a decided flare which is most acceptable and infinitely more graceful, and one sees pleating frequently introduced.

Soft cashmeres, satin cloths and the like will hold their place, I fancy, but we will undoubtedly see less veiling—I mean less of the tunic effect that has been practically exhausted this summer—the newer idea seems to run toward

bandings, wide and elaborate, braided, embroidered and what not, that weigh the foot of a great many frocks.

The empire effect is going to come into its own again—it hasn't been out long, but it is undeniably becoming and that is enough to justify its reappearance in evening and house gowns. Long skirts will again be in the majority and I am glad. For formal wear or house gowns, I never could admire the short skirt models so popular this spring and summer and truly I do not think the woman who knows favored them for these occasions.

The immense summer vogue abroad for black and white is bound to last well on into the winter—quite a new note too was struck in many instances in black and white combinations—frequently black and white pekin stripe costumes were seen, and though bizarre, they are immensely becoming.

I should think that we had run the seamless shoulder to the ground, but it is still with us and there seems not the slightest sign of its retirement—what the new note in sleeves will be I do not know.

A New Coiffure

But already we have been introduced to a new coiffure and I hear it is a hint of what we may expect in evening gowns—classical Grecian effects. This coiffure is of a deceptive simplicity—the hair is parted (frequently at the side front) and drawn softly back from the face in large, loose waves—a charming soft bunch of loose curls is arranged quite high in the back.

But if this is not becoming do not attempt it, for it is either a success or a

failure, there is no happy medium and if women would only realize the individual and distinct charm of a truly "personal" coiffure—one that looks as if it grew and did not originate on the head of a hairdresser's dummy—we would have fewer absurdities and more charming simple styles of hair dressing.

A distinction of this sort is worth striving for—and a woman whose way of doing her hair is all her own and becoming has much to be thankful for—in a crowd she is at once individual and attractive by contrast. I think the frightful sameness one notices at the theater and opera is truly deplorable, but I believe one sees less of it now than a few seasons past.

Evening Frocks and Wraps

I hear that the richest of brocades, soft and flexible, are going to be the new note in evening frocks. A brocade, to be successful, needs just the right treatment—little trimming, of the very richest variety, a Venice lace perhaps or merely a graceful draping of the material itself, but if it "arrives" it is apt to outshine by sheer dignity and simplicity many more delicately elaborate frocks.

I think we are going to see more and more dark evening gowns worn—especially for dinner and theater. Their extreme *chic* was established last season and I feel that they will develop along new lines this year. I saw one that just came over which will illustrate beautifully and also serve to introduce a novelty that I think is going to be a success. The body of the gown was of a dull elephant's gray satin souple—a tunic of *vieux bleu* mousseline with a hint of violet in its depths extended to the ankles where it was weighted by a ten or twelve inch band of bead embroidery done in delicate pink and self-tone blue beads—this beadwork formed the half-belt which extended around the back and sides and left an unbroken princess line in front—and it was repeated around the *décolletage* and bordered the tiny sleeves. This idea of a half-belt, leaving

the long line in front, was first introduced this summer by Béchoff-David and worn by Mlle. de Bray of the "Renaissance" with great success. In fact, in her gown, which was a combination of white satin and yellow chiffon weighed down by a band of black chiffon embroidered in white beads, that formed a striking design—the belt showed only under the arms and the fullness in the back was Shirred in at the waist, giving possibly a longer line.

For early fall we are going to see no end of chiffon and *voile de soie* evening wraps—long and clinging—many of them fur trimmed and introducing satin in their make-up. The handsomest new one I have seen was odd as well as beautiful. Its color was a queer red brown—*modoré* the French call it—of the most delicate *voile de soie*—hung straight, long and loose—lying gracefully on the ground all round. The front introduced long, straight satin pieces and from the waist up there flared narrow square revers. The inner edge of these (the outer edge of the satin front pieces) was ornamented with a design made of the corded satin. This in turn was edged with sable which widened out on to the revers at the waist line and edging them, formed a narrow round collar in back. It also edged the bottom of the wrap and the sleeves. Delicate roselike designs of the corded voile were sprinkled here and there over the surface of the coat and weighted down the corners of the fronts. The sleeves were charming—loose and long—they were caught up some four or five times on the outer edge which gave a delicate, fragile effect to the *voile de soie*. One sees quite a little of this cording on wraps, and the wraps themselves are frequently of odd and beautiful colors.

Suits

We are going to see a great many silk suits—satins and moirés—for early fall and nothing is prettier or newer. They were well liked this past summer in Paris and on the Continent, the smartest colors seeming to be black and a dark raven's-wing blue; the somberness being frequently relieved by the lining of the

coat or tiny inserts of a brighter colored satin—or again the hat struck the only vivid note in the costume. I fancy we shall see many neutral toned moirés this fall, somber gray ones, a lovely chestnut called *marron clair* and a few wine shades. Each fall seems to bring out the latter regularly with the usual amount of black.

Later on velvets of all descriptions will be worn to death. I thought they were last year, but I hear we haven't seen the end of them, although I fear that they will not hold the place they did a winter ago, and I wouldn't be at all surprised if they become entirely *passé* before the season is over.

Walking Costumes

October and November are the months par excellence for walking costumes, and while nothing is more satisfying than a successful gown of this sort, I think nothing is more apt to be mediocre. There is no surer test of individuality and smartness. A more elaborate costume gives one unlimited opportunities, while a severe tailor suit relies for its success upon its creator for the lines, and its wearer for the carriage. More than this, one does not ask—depending for individuality upon the accessories. But a smart walking dress, simple, yet *chic*—show me a house that can turn out a half a dozen of these and I'll warrant its success is assured. There is no single gown—or type of gown in one's wardrobe that receives the wear a walking gown does—and if it proves becoming and achieves its mission, one is amply repaid for all the thought and care expended upon it. The American woman is at her best in a well fitting simple gown of this type, and without a doubt she knows it. No matter what novelty the season brings forth, one sees a certain number of blue serge—they are an institution, a sign of spring and fall—I have never known a season without them, and I doubt if there are many wardrobes that do not contain at least one blue serge costume. There are no end of newer fabrics and colors—popular for the moment—but there is a cer-

tain unobtrusive note of good style about a smart blue serge that has endeared it to women of taste.

Many of the fall models still show the peasant influence of the spring and summer in their simplicity—while any number close in quite a distinct fashion down the left front—the opening or closing being worked by a band—some two inches wide which extends almost to the knee; on many, this band strikes the most decided note of the costume, being of beadwork in vivid colors, in black satin embroidered in Persian arabesques, or piped with an Empire green satin or possibly another shade of cloth. I notice also no end of revers—usually black satin—sometimes long and narrow, widening a trifle toward the bottom, again shawl-like in their width and frequently running into square sailor collars. We—especially the younger of us—have shown a liking for sailor collars for some seasons—quite our own idea—and strangely enough, the Parisians adopted them this summer and wore them on every conceivable sort of frock and suit. They are another very becoming fashion, and black satin ones will be very popular early this season.

I presume we will be overrun with beadwork before the year is out. Last spring saw the start of it and although it did not make the immediate success here that it did abroad—we used it on formal negligees and evening frocks—Paul Poiret and Robert sent us a few good models exploiting it, but it was left to the Parisian to introduce it on lingerie frocks, linens, silks and what not, so I fancy we will feel the effect over here and use it on fall clothes. I think it's a charming idea with unlimited possibilities in the color line; it may serve to brighten up a dull-toned street gown, give weight to a delicate house frock, and is a delightful touch on chiffon blouses for wear with semi-tailored suits, so let us give thanks and make use of it. I didn't mention its use on evening gowns or wraps because it seems less new in that particular adaption, although of undoubted charm and popularity.

Hats

Many of the new hats reflect the late summer Continental successes. A new note is the tiny lace edging which falls over the brim—not plaited or gathered—put on plain and oftentimes showing black over white. The idea has been seen heretofore on small hats of the cloche variety, but it is quite new on the large flat cape lines, and while it is undoubtedly charming at times—framing the face so attractively—still it is a fashion that should be handled most carefully as it can so easily become a caricature. It lends itself especially to evening hats and suggests many fascinating possibilities along those lines. Georgette is favoring its use on small hats that sink far down on the head.

I must say there seems no happy medium in hats so far this season; they seem either very large and flaring, or extremely small and close fitting. I saw some turbans with a very military air—one I thought smart was in a popular wine shade with an immense flaring bow, its loops shooting off in quite an alarming fashion toward the rear—another had an odd two-toned fancy as its only trimming. Few of these have any trimming to speak of, depending upon the proper lines for their success, like a great many of the smartest summer hats. Suzanne Talbot has sent over some charming hats for semi-dress—so new and so suitable for autumn and winter in this city of winds where a close fitting hat for general wear is almost a necessity.

One of her newest hats is quite long and narrow from front to back. It is not more than four or five inches in height, and sets low on the head, framing the face in the fashion so popular at the moment. It is made of a box plaiting of black velvet lined with a tapestry silk and confined at the center by an odd tinsel ribbon that ties at one side in a prim little bow.

Another of hers is almost all crown—a rather large bowl shape—with a small brim which turns down in front and rolls a trifle in the back, but the hat is worn so far back and so low on the head

(as are almost all the hats this season) that it does not in any way shade the face—in fact a tiny bit of the facing shows against the hair in front and also in back where it rolls up. The hat was of a black beaver, soft and furry, the lining a brilliant royal blue, and shooting off from the back of the crown at the right side, was a full and bushy blue fancy—a sort of aigrette.

I saw quite a little skunk used, in no end of ways—whole turbans of it—(their novelty lying in the odd draping of the skins and their shape) and bands of it on large flat velvet or beaver hats. Then I've seen charming seal hats enlivened with a touch of color, and mole is to be pushed by the Parisians this year. There are so few flat furs with possibilities in the draping line, that we are rather dependent upon seal and mole, but fortunately they are both very becoming to most women.

Georgette is favoring some wine shades. A pretty model is a draped velvet one not unlike a Corday with interwoven bands of skunk, an upstanding self-colored moiré bow at one side, and the double black and white lace frill to frame the face.

But the very loveliest one that I saw from Georgette was a large flat affair with five straight thin plumes posed at the back and nodding over the crown, each one an odd and beautiful shade, proving that the hand of an artist effected the successful combination.

In one of the better class drygoods shops I saw again the feather hats, turbans chiefly, that regularly come to the fore every season. I can't remember a single fall without them—they are another institution, truly just as much a sign of fall as those eternal maline ruffs are an indication that spring is here. Both have their place no doubt and I can say nothing disparaging about them except that their eternal and absolutely regular reappearance seems to me "enough said." However, the shop I speak of claims that they are "immensely popular" in Paris, which seems to justify their appearance, and I have no doubt there is a ready sale for them. There seems to be a large class of trade

whose delightful (?) regularity must be a joy to the shops—the type who purchase each spring for “dress” a black hat with “plumes” because “it goes with everything—you know,” and a foulard dress to be sure. Each summer they are bound to want a ruffled lingerie hat with a pink rose or a blue bow—and surely a pongee coat. While in the fall if a feather turban isn’t due, it’s a marabout boa, and a little later winter calls for a broadcloth suit without fail and usually another black hat “with plumes”—what a joy life must be to them too—no harassing thoughts regarding the merits of satin souple as against those of cashmere de soie—no question of the successful blending of tones—merely the dictum that the cloth must be good and possibly a little hesitancy between “old rose” and “cadet blue”—and a final decision that blue is being worn this season, which of course settles it once for all, and the matter is instantly dismissed with a satisfied sigh which says: “Why should I worry? I have conformed to fashion, I have paid \$3.50 a yard for my broadcloth and so of course the result is bound to be a huge success—all the women in my bridge will envy me—so let us rejoice, our troubles are at an end. And to think how some women worry over their clothes when it is all so simple.”

New Walking, Riding and Motor Hats

One of the foremost manufacturers of hats who supplies the first class dealers with many of their walking hats, etc., is showing a number of good shapes in hatter’s plush for early wear. Their chic lies in their extreme simplicity—they are bound and banded with gros grain ribbon and no other trimming is intended to go on them. The hatter’s plush is the material of which a man’s “silk” hat is made, you know, and its shiny smoothness is ideal for wear with tailor gowns. The shapes were mostly small—some with mushroom tendencies, others turning up at one side. These are also excellent for riding hats, many of the younger set using them almost to

the exclusion of derbies, tri-corns, and a small brim sailors are perhaps the most popular.

I saw some good motor hats in taffetas for early fall and lovely soft furry beavers for winter. They were in the “dust proof” shades—browns, grays, blues and the like, and were made to frame the face attractively and stay on without hat pins, of course—effective strings frequently tied them under the chin and usually self-colored veils accompanied them. I noticed in several instances that the taffeta ones were trimmed with huge flat, flowerlike rosettes of the silk very similar to the ones so popular on frocks at present.

A Commodious Hat Trunk

In these days of marvelous millinery almost every woman has a collection of hats each season. I think most of them realize the supreme value of a becoming hat, and bewail the fact that it is practically impossible to take much of an assortment when visiting. To be sure a certain amount of baggage is permissible (and how remarkably one’s ideas in that respect have changed in recent years—a modest steamer trunk was deemed sufficient for a week end not so very long ago—and now—I hate to think what would happen to the clothes considered necessary for four or five days’ fashionable visiting if they were to go in the one tiny trunk).

But more than one hat trunk does seem a trifle extreme and the one trunk at best will only accommodate four to six hats; and a hat is not a dependable quantity I find—today it is becoming—tomorrow for some unknown reason—one’s hair perhaps—one’s disposition maybe—twist as one will it refuses to lend itself to reason and makes one look a fright. Then how good it seems to have a choice, to be able to select another and not be confined to just that particular one for that frock, which brings me, if you agree, to this new hat trunk I saw the other day, which accommodates fourteen hats and has a tray on top which I thought splendid for veils, gloves, parasols and similar

outer accessories. With a trunk of this sort (which, although as large as the average traveling trunk, would be very light in weight) one could stay indefinitely and have a delightful supply of millinery from which to make a choice.

The house at which I saw it is famous all over the world for the complete revolution in packing due to its space saving devices, and this deserves to rank with the best of them.

A Perfume of Charm

Is there anything more appealing to femininity at large than a delightful new perfume? To be sure many are called but few are chosen, but if only it enters the circle of the chosen few and is accepted by women of refined discretion nothing is surer of a hearty welcome than a really good perfume—and whisper it softly—nothing is rarer.

There are perfumes and perfumes and many of them are highly successful from a business point of view—which to the particular woman is just the trouble—everybody soon uses them and their day of exclusiveness is over. But a new one has just been imported from Russia that in my opinion justifies all that can be said of it, and so far it is certainly quite uncommon. I think it is bound to be a success, for it is just elusive enough in its fragrance to attract, and positive enough to hold one's attention, and besides it isn't at all cheap, which is a blessing in disguise, for while a bottle lasts one a long time—due to its strength—the price will keep it from becoming common I hope.

All of the toilet accessories—eau de toilette, soaps, powders, a wonderfully lasting sachet, bath salts, etc., are also supplied in the same odor, and I feel sure that it's refined delicacy will make a place for it.

A New Storm Coat for Men

I saw the very best thing the other day in an all-round useful coat for stormy weather, driving, etc., that I've come across in some time. When I first

glanced at it I couldn't believe the clerk's assertion that it was of a woven fabric and not a leather, it was so seasoned and treated that it resembled a hide, (a light tan in color) and yet it was delightfully soft and flexible to the touch and not nearly as heavy as one would imagine at a first inspection. The lining, which, if I recollect correctly, was merely the reverse side of the fabric, was a plaid worsted, insuring a little warmth, and giving a smart touch. I couldn't imagine anything better adapted for driving, etc., and as for keeping out the elements it was such a relief from the ever present raincoats one sees on every hand. And then it wasn't cut with the raglan shoulder which, by the way, is going out again. It didn't last very long at this appearance, but I presume we'll see it again in another few years. It is one of those perennial fashions due every so often. At the house where I saw the coat (they are so dependable in every way, one is sure of finding just the right thing there) I saw some soft vicuna steamer rugs in lovely colors—reversible, in two tones—dark green in one instance with a lovely soft blue stripe, showing the opposite combination on the other side. I mention them principally for their unusual and beautiful colorings and the delightful softness and warmth of the texture.

September Phonograph Records

Mischa Elman has become such a recognized genius and distinct favorite with us that one is glad of a chance to hear his wonderful playing reproduced by the phonograph. The result is very successful and there are several new records of his just out. Two of them I thought especially noteworthy—a "Caprice Basque" of Pablo de Sarasate and Haydn's charming "Menuett"—the former has al' the wild charm and rhythmic cadence of Southern France, which is in contrast to the quaint primness of the minuet. Two other new records that are especially good are the ever popular "O Sole Mio" sung by de Gorgoza and a charming rendering of the "Four Leaf Clover" by Evan Wil-

liams, whose voice comes out so very clearly on the phonograph.

I also heard two records of operatic favorites that have recently been issued that are both sure of success. One is the well known "Soldier's Chorus" from "Faust" with orchestral accompaniment, the other the popular duet from "Il Puritani" sung in this instance by Mardones and Blanchard of the Boston Opera Company. Their voices blend beautifully and result adds another to the list of popular male duets.

A "Feminine" Shop

I came across a charming conceit in a tiny Avenue shop the other day—a small monocle with a slender handle—the whole inset with brilliants. The handle was curved like a flower stem and the whole thing was so small and so ridiculously feminine one's attention was immediately held by it—just the thing to inspect the menu, glance over the program or racing card, and something new for one's chain. This little shop is gaining quite a reputation for its faithful reproduction of expensive jewelry, and its farsightedness in bringing out novelties as soon as they appear abroad and before they are shown in the other shops here. Charming collar and belt pins, the still popular medallion, artistic earrings, etc., are all to be found there, and sachets, perfumes and soaps. It is an essentially feminine place—a hundred dainty conceits to tempt one on every hand.

Lifelike Photography

The art of photography has taken such marvelous strides lately that nothing surprises us, but our admiration is demanded by a particularly lifelike portrait that a well known artist photographer in town is taking. He discovered quite accidentally that by using a certain chemical pigment upon parts of a picture during development, a beautiful and natural flesh tone resulted when the print became dry. This photograph was christened Duo-Tone, signifying two colors. It can only be made upon a certain style of print and is so wonderfully lifelike and beautiful one does not

feel the absence of color in the rest of the picture. Another advantage is that these pictures, while being startling in their lifelike appearance, are only a very little more expensive than ordinary sepia tones at the best studios.

A Practical Suction Cleaner

The many practical uses to which the modern vacuum cleaning machines are put are daily growing more varied. Two of them seem to me new enough and surely of sufficient value to justify a greater publicity.

I think we all know that one can accomplish wonders in the house cleaning line; upholsteries, draperies, bedding and the like take on a new lease of life when treated to this real cleaning for the first time. But I do not think that we all realize the more personal uses to which the cleaning machines can be put.

I refer for instance to their value in cleaning clothes, even delicate wraps and hats. There can be no easier method of cleansing these from the ever present dust and dirt and no surer way of prolonging their beauty and usefulness.

The other practical use which seems to me one of the most valuable to woman is the special attachment for hair drying, pillow renovating, in fact for anything that would be improved by a current of pure clean air. All women will agree that the one great disadvantage in having one's hair washed at home has always been the length of time required for the drying process. Electric fans will do it, but the current of air isn't as direct as that afforded by the suction hose attachment which is affixed to the exhaust nozzle of the vacuum machine, and accordingly affords a current that may be directed to any portion of the head.

A great many of the vacuum cleaners on the market today have either or both of two faults, they are too cumbersome or too expensive.

The one I refer to, which has ten attachments for various departments of cleaning, has neither of these faults. It weighs but ten pounds and can be used as one would a carpet sweeper, and it is cheap; first, as compared to others put-

ting forth similar claims; and secondly, if one considers at all the labor saved. Another great point in its favor is that it will operate on either a direct or an alternating current, having what is known as a universal motor, which fact you will probably not appreciate unless you happen to have the kind which refuses to act with the electric system installed in your house. Then I'm sure you will appreciate the value of a universal motor.

An Ideal Laundry Help

Even the most trifling detail that proves itself a time or labor saver in the "below stairs" portion of the home is welcomed with delight by the modern housekeeper.

You can never tell how far reaching its ends may be. Who knows but that it may be the means of appeasing the rising wrath of a slightly perturbed laundress and thus save an extra visit to the employment agency—that bugbear of the American housekeeper.

There is an article on market that has been in use for years for sealing jellies, etc., and quite recently its value in another line has been discovered and accordingly a name has been given it to distinguish it from the thousand and one inferior grades on the market.

It is nothing more nor less than a grade of pure paraffin which if used in washing clothes is a wonderful help in loosening dirt and grease, and gives the clothes a clean and white appearance.

I'm sure if produced and demonstrated at the psychological moment it should be sufficient in itself to calm even a tempestuous laundress bent on instant flight, and think of the time alone, to say nothing of the energy, that it would save.

It may seem a far cry from a contemplation of fall fashions to a recommendation of an article for laundry use, but it is a seeming trifle of this sort which frequently oils the wheels and keeps the household machinery running smoothly.

Attractive Linens

Quite the most beautiful tea cloth I've seen in some time is a recent im-

portation of one of the leading linen houses. One almost hesitates at attempting a description. It is a circular cloth edged with a wonderful Venetian point lace some five or six inches wide. The body is a combination of English eyelet work and Flemish lace medallions joined by the very finest of Cluny insertion, while in the center of the cloth is a square medallion showing a graceful female figure—a Flora I should say—and two Cupids, the whole being as fine a piece of Venetian work as I have seen—as perfect as a painting. I do not think there is anything richer or in better taste for the table than Venetian lace. It has a certain air to it that, in my mind, is always associated with handsome silver, china and highly polished wood.

In the shop I speak of they have several sets with medallions—of Filet lace, of Fayal work and occasionally of Venetian point—all showing either heads or full figures. Besides admiring them purely for the beauty of the work, I think that a medallion of this sort (accompanied usually by the ever popular English eyelet work) lends distinction to a set and is decidedly good style.

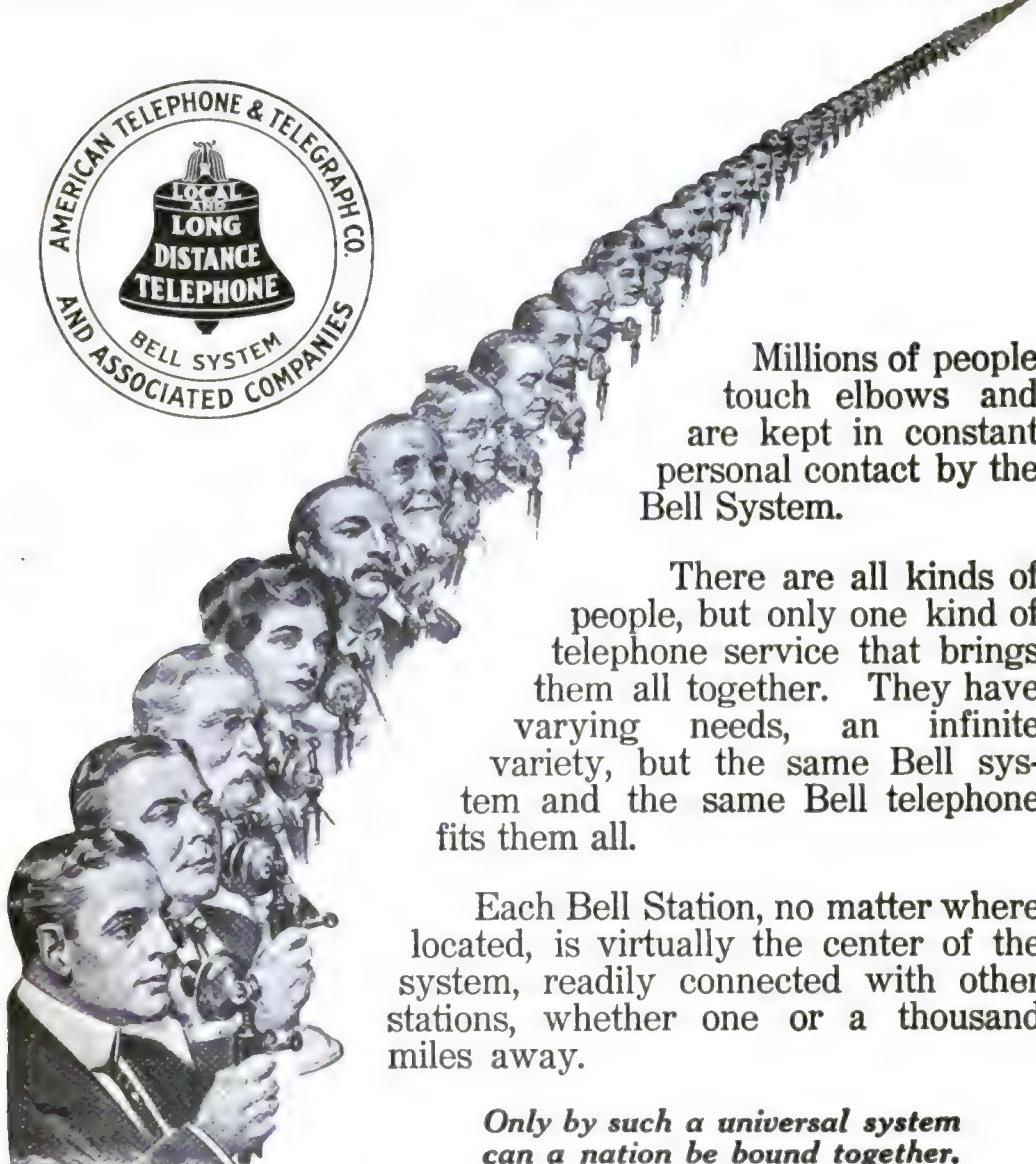
A Good Bag

In one of the drygoods shops they are showing a most sensible and practical shopping bag—in no way startling or unique—but well arranged, of a convenient size, commodious and attractive.

It comes in either eight or ten by five inch size, is envelope shaped, in morocco leather, in all colors. It has three pockets—the outer ones moiré lined, the inner one lined with kid containing vanity fittings (which include a mirror large enough to see more than the tip of one's nose), change purse and card case. It has a split bottom and a flat strap handle so that it may be slipped on the arm if desired. Its merit lies in the fact that it is of just the convenient size, and containing just the proper amount of fittings.

[Note—Readers of *The Smart Set* inquiring for names of shops where articles are purchasable should inclose a stamped addressed envelope for reply, and state page and date.]

A United Nation



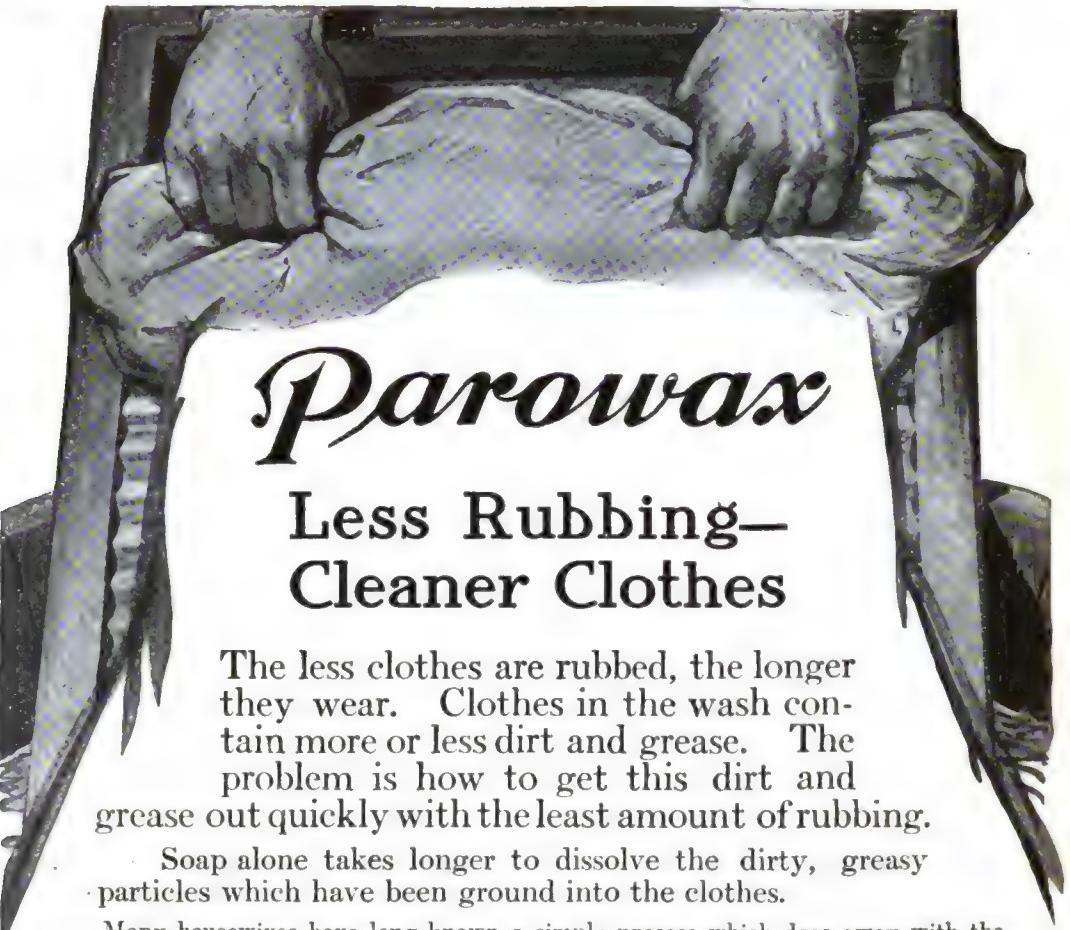
Millions of people touch elbows and are kept in constant personal contact by the Bell System.

There are all kinds of people, but only one kind of telephone service that brings them all together. They have varying needs, an infinite variety, but the same Bell system and the same Bell telephone fits them all.

Each Bell Station, no matter where located, is virtually the center of the system, readily connected with other stations, whether one or a thousand miles away.

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Soap alone takes longer to dissolve the dirty, greasy particles which have been ground into the clothes.

Many housewives have long known a simple process which does away with the hard rubbing of clothes, and yet cleans them better than the old way. Their method is to add the Parowax brand of Pure Refined Paraffine to the boiling water and soap in the boiler.

They simply put one-half teacup of shaved Parowax and the usual quantity of shaved soap in the hot water in the boiler, which is sufficient for one boiler of wash. The Parowax and the soap dissolve quickly and loosen the dirt, so that the old amount of hard rubbing is unnecessary.

Parowax so thoroughly loosens the dirt that every atom slips away from the fabric. After the clothes have been boiled, you rinse them in warm water. You will be astonished to see how clean and white they come out—like new. Parowax is odorless and tasteless and leaves no odor in the clothes.

To protect the user, the trade-mark "Parowax" has been given to the grade of Pure Refined Paraffine sold by this Company for years. This absolutely pure paraffine has been used all these years for sealing jellies, etc., and for washing and ironing.

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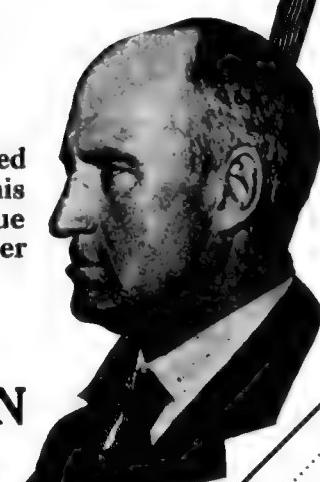
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THE SMART SET - -	\$3.00		
Woman's Home Companion - -	1.50		
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Mott says: "My method arrests the disease, even though it has destroyed most of the kidneys, and preserves intact that portion not yet destroyed. The medicines I use neutralize the poisons that form a toxine that destroys the cells in the tubes in the kidneys."

The Evening Post, one of the leading daily papers of Cincinnati, Ohio, hearing of Dr. Mott's success, asked if he would be willing to give a public test to demonstrate his faith in his treatment and prove its merit by treating five persons suffering from Bright's Disease and Diabetes, free.

Dr. Mott accepted the conditions, and twelve persons were selected. After a most critical chemical analysis and microscopic examination had been made, five out of the twelve were decided upon. These cases were placed under Dr. Mott's care and reports published each week in the Post. In three months all were discharged by Dr. Mott as cured. The persons treated gained their normal weight, strength and appetite, and were able to resume their usual work. Anyone desiring to read the details of this public test can obtain copies by sending to Dr. Mott for them.

This public demonstration gave Dr. Mott an international reputation that has brought him into correspondence with people all over the world, and several noted Europeans are numbered among those who have taken his treatment and been cured, as treatment can be administered effectively by mail.

The Doctor will correspond with those who are suffering with Bright's Disease, Diabetes, or any kidney trouble whatever, and will be pleased to give his expert opinion free to those who will send him a description of their symptoms. An essay which the doctor has prepared about kidney trouble, and describing his new method of treatment, will also be mailed by him. Correspondence for this purpose should be addressed to IRVINE K. MOTT, M. D., 575 Mitchell Bldg., Cincinnati, O.

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